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BE OF GOOD CHEER

BY

THE REV. W. P. G. McCORMICK

Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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TO LISTENERS

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR PRAYER AND ENCOURAGING LETTERS THIS BOOK IS HUMBLY DEDICATED.

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INTRODUCTION

THE only telegram which I sent on my tour round the world was from Shanghai :

" Appoint McCormick.

BISHOP, Shanghai."

This was when my dear old friend, Sheppard, had decided that he must retire. It was not a difficult decision to make as he (Sheppard) wanted him as his successor, the Archbishop recommended him as the best man for the post, the large representative Parish Council asked for him, and I knew him well.

Right well has he justified this great measure of confidence, and this is the man who has written this book.

I am glad that this is, as he tells us, the first book that he has written, as what we want in these books is, not so much the book as *the Man*, and the Man stands out throughout the whole of this book, and those who have heard him so often Broadcasting will easily imagine that they are hearing his actual voice.

I am glad he has chosen the subject of " JOY," as JOY is the one note most wanted in our religion to-day.

So often religion is associated with much that is drab and dull, whereas if we really believed what we profess to believe, our hearts would be " *shouting for Joy* " all the time.

As McCormick says, that does not mean that we are not taking to heart the many sorrows and sadnesses of

Life, but that we are doing our very best, day by day, to alleviate them, and that we see "The Gospel of God's Love" shining behind the cloud; we may be "sorrowful," as St. Paul says he was, "*yet always rejoicing.*"

For, as we all discovered in The School of Prayer, with which we began The Autumn Work, the whole secret of our religious life, including our Prayer Life, depends upon our idea of God.

It is a terrible story which is told in this work, of the young soldier caught by a long-range shell just as he was going on leave after two years, and his saying to his Padre before he died: "Wasn't that just like God?"

The idea that God is jealously watching "to catch us out," "spying out all our ways," and only anxious to disappoint us if possible, is only too common, and with such an idea of God a happy religion is impossible.

Whereas, of course, what is really the truth is that "God is a Father with a Mother's Heart," and was just as sorry that the shell hit the boy as the Mother waiting in vain for him at home.

If we are to revive Religion, we have got to restore the idea of God to the world, not as a malevolent Power, or as a merely good-natured "Jove," but as revealed in all His Holiness, Greatness and Love in Jesus Christ Himself.

"He that hath seen *Me*, hath seen the Father," is one of the great Sayings of the world.

May this book help us to find "our true Joy in God!"

A. F. LONDON.

PREFACE

I HAVE been asked to write a book. I have never perpetrated such a deed before ; nor can I imagine that I have any qualifications for doing so, certainly no literary or theological qualifications. And yet, I suppose the facts of experience count for something and the knowledge of men and their needs which have come through that experience. This has, at any rate, been out of the ordinary.

After a short apprenticeship in England I served nine months with the troops in South Africa, and then started a parish among the mines of Johannesburg on entirely virgin soil, with twelve gold mines to look after and hardly a decent place in which to hold a meeting, much less a service ; living in the men's quarters in one of their rooms twelve feet by ten for a considerable time in a community which was cosmopolitan in the extreme.

After seven years of that, and having built a church and a vicarage, I was sent to a suburban parish in Johannesburg, and at the end of five years of this found myself at home on leave when the war broke out.

Four and a half years of war as a chaplain ; nearly eight years as Vicar of Croydon ; and now over two years at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, make up the story of that experience.

This Lent book is meant for those who usually read such books and, while one must bear that in mind, I cannot forget the larger audience to whom I speak so often at broadcast services from the pulpit at St. Martin's,

and who may possibly read what one has to say as well as listen to me over the wireless. They will, I hope, forgive me if they read very much the same things as they have heard ; but I cannot do otherwise as my whole soul is burning with the desire to present the good news of Jesus Christ to the man in the street in a way which he can understand ; and one fact which emerges from my vast correspondence is that they do seem to understand and have confidence in one as well. If it had not been for this fact, I would not have presumed to make this attempt. I know too well my own inadequacy, but as God sometimes does use the weak and foolish to do His work I live in hope that He will do it now.

I feel it only right to apologise to those readers of these series who have been accustomed to a very high standard of writing and learning, as I have neither of those gifts ; I have had to write this during a very busy life and in a comparatively short time ; but I send it out in the hope that it may be of some use to those who generally read these books, as well as to those who have welcomed our services.

I would like to have thanked by name those who have helped me in various ways to get this book into its final form ; they know I am immensely grateful to them ; but I fear they might be criticised for not having urged me to throw it in the fire ; and I would spare them this extra burden, for their encouragement has kept me going.

To Miss Ann Fulton who gave up many spare evenings in a busy life to deciphering my illegible script and translating it on to a typewriter I owe the greatest debt, and I trust that her new life on account of which she has changed her name since this was finished will be filled with that joy about which she has helped me to write in this book.

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CHAPTER I

THE NEED OF JOY

IT is just over eleven years since the war came to an end, a war which has changed so many things, and yet which, in some ways, seems to have made but little change, so little change at any rate in the things which we hoped with all our hearts at the time would be changed. One meets people to-day who seem to think that the only salvation for the world, or for our country, is to go back to pre-war standards. No doubt we should like some pre-war things, especially things like the income tax, but you can't have a vast upheaval like the war without changing the income tax and almost everything else.

For we saw a new vision ; and things can never be the same when you have once seen a new light on the world. It reveals the dark places in a way which cannot be forgotten.

I want to suggest that we look into those changes and to find out whether we, in our lives, are trying to live up to the vision of the things we have seen, and it is surely a Lenten obligation ; for the season of Lent takes us back to the great cry which rang through Judea at the beginning of our Lord's ministry first through the mouth of John the Baptist and then from our Lord Himself, "Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Now repentance has become a theological word with a specialised meaning, so that it does not necessarily convey

to us the sense of the original Greek word, μετανοια ; the Revised Version translates it "change of outlook," and I am thankful for that phrase as it conveys the sense of the message which is needed to-day just as much as when our Lord came to Palestine ; and this necessary change of outlook concerns not only our manner of life or conduct, but also our thoughts and ideas about some of the most fundamental things. The more I see of life in this country of ours, after my experience in the Colonies and in the war, the more I believe some of us need some kind of dynamite to remove our self-complacency ; even the war hasn't done it, and there was enough dynamite in that in all conscience to move most things. But you will say, "Is not the Christian religion a fixed thing ? The faith once delivered to the Saints cannot be changed. The Creeds are not things to be tampered with." Yes, no doubt, all that is true, and yet there has been change, and great change for the better. Not, I believe, in the essential fundamentals of the Christian faith, but change in the way those fundamentals had been developed, and often wrongly developed, down the ages. It seems to me that our modern outlook is better and this has been more marked since 1914 than probably any period in our Church's history.

Yet the Church has changed very little to meet the new needs of her children, and in consequence the statement is being made constantly that while people are at heart religious they are having less and less to do with organised Christianity. This seems from my experience to be true, and if so it is up to both them and the Church to find a new way to come together ; it is no use merely throwing mud and blaming either the one or the other, because both are losers by this estrangement ; the Church, because a Christian cannot be "a lone wolf"—"I

keeps myself to myself," as the old woman said, may be British, but it is not Christian—and the people, because some of the best and most robust material which the Church badly needs is lost. What is wanted is a renewal of our Church life, a spring-cleaning to get rid of the dust. I am not a pessimist, and I believe that the Church still has a very great influence on the life of the nation, but everyone will admit that it might have a great deal more, and that we are losing still large numbers of men and women of goodwill who ought to be helping us in those trials which naturally arise when we change our outlook. What are we Christians doing about it? The small-minded view is to say, "What has been good enough for our Fathers is good enough for people to-day; the faith once delivered to the Saints does not change; the Churches are here for people to attend and receive the Sacraments and hear the Gospel; if they will not do so it is their fault and they are neglecting their salvation. Let them stew in their own juice; we will not pander to them; they must come in on our terms." Yes, but that is just what worries me so often: are our own terms Christ's terms? Is the Church really Christian in its terms or in its general attitude to the world? Is pride of place, position, worldly power, the sort of attribute which we can call Christian? Is the Church really following Christ when it is censorious and hard and worldly? People are saying the same kind of thing about the Church as is being said by thoughtful Hindus in India: "We believe in the ethical teaching of Christ, but we do not see that teaching lived in your Western countries which call themselves Christian." Are people wrong when they say our terms do not include things which Christ would have included, such as a bold attitude towards peace, or slums, or industrial relationships? And

what shall we say to people who affirm that our terms differ so vitally in different places that it is almost impossible to tell what the Church's terms are? Then again, should we be surprised when people say they find such conflicting ideas of God in the Church, and especially such hopelessly out-of-date ones in some of our theological expressions and even our methods of worship (which seem to them clean contrary to the spirit of Christ's teaching) that they are shy of our "terms"?

The fact of the matter is, the world is changing its values with great rapidity; there are more seekers after truth at the moment than probably ever before, and the Christ is still walking down the world's highway proclaiming His message to men, and challenging their attitude to God and their fellow-men; crying to one and all, and not least to the Church itself: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Change your outlook, think out afresh what My teaching means for the modern world, come back to Me fearlessly and with all sincerity and learn of Me, and you shall find the truth which will make you free.

The trumpet call to Christian people to-day is to get back to Christ Himself and His teaching about God, and to be ready to scrap prejudices, conventionalities, and even theologies which are incompatible with His teaching; then only can we unite and show the Spirit of Christ in such a way that the ordinary man may see Christ both in the Church and in Christian people.

The question is, whether we are in a state of mind in which we can repent or, rather, change our outlook. If we are not, I fear these pages will be of no value to you. Some people won't read anything which differs from their viewpoint. For myself I believe we are all learners—children asking questions, desirous to find out

the truth, and expecting to get help all the time from our Father. If we are like that, we must be ready and able to accept any new revelation when it comes. For me the one fundamental fact which does not change is the fact of Jesus Christ and His revelation of God. And it is with that I start, because I believe it is possible to show that the greatest change that has taken place in the last few years has been in the idea of God through our getting back to the fundamental fact—Jesus Christ and His revelation of God.

Having written these lines I came to Assisi—the town of St. Francis—for a ten-days' holiday, and immediately the glamour of that great man's life took hold of me. What was his secret? He fell in love with God and all that God stands for—beauty, goodness and truth; he got back to Christ and in looking at the world through God's eyes he found a joy which no one and nothing could take from him. Everywhere he went he radiated joy, the birds and animals were his friends, he brought joy to lepers and outcasts, and the world of the time found something new, a joy which it had largely lost. He had gone back to Christ, and like the disciples in the early days of the Church, he brought to the world a joy so radiant and so simple that men once more saw Christ through him.

Is the world so very unlike what it was in St. Francis' time? In a material and scientific sense it certainly is. But what of men and men's outlook on life? Do we not need recalling to a joy such as he had? How many of us have time for joy in simple things? We are too busy; the industrial machine has entered into our souls, and machinery with its deadening monotony is pushing out joy. And yet we try to get it; the exaggerated pursuit of pleasure which we see on all sides seems to me an indication that men want joy but can't

get it. We want to be happy but we can't, so we try to substitute pleasure for joy, and pretend that we have found it ; but there is always "the morning after the night before" feeling about it, so no wonder people become surfeited and blasé and old before the bloom of youth has gone. And if we turn to the Churches, to the places which, called by the name of Christ, should be rejoicing in the Lord always, what do we find ? A radiant joy in Christian faces, or in their hearts, or in their outlook on life ? I wish I could think it ; I rather think that this virtue is singularly lacking in many a church congregation, where it is quite impossible to be spontaneous or you would be turned out of the Church. Viewed from the pulpit it really is a most depressing sight, especially in a strange church. I remember once that unconventional giant, Neville Talbot, suddenly stopped in the middle of his sermon, and said : "Why are you so glum ? Am I boring you ? Why don't you laugh ? " And when he did tell them something amusing and there was a respectable titter, two most orthodox people got up and walked out as a protest, though I am glad to think the congregation imagined they were ill. In fact, our religion does not seem to include humour any more than it does joy. But you may say : "That congregation perhaps included many who had real deep joy in their hearts, too deep for even humour." I know it ; but what value is joy which is never seen ? We are afraid to show joy in our worship, we daren't even sing "alleluia" as if we meant it ; and the consequence is that we love to sing maudlin sentimental hymns whose decorum is suited to "Church" but has no sort of connection with our daily lives. Of course, things are improving. In some churches people are really beginning to feel that they can smile and look happy and even laugh,

and feel at home ; but in the majority it is still true to say that you could never take a stranger to Christianity and show him Christian joy, deep and real, in any ordinary Church service. This might not matter if one could discern real joy in the ordinary Christian's life—although if it is vital it certainly ought to appear in his worship—but the fact is that it does not. If you don't agree with this, then just try to reckon how many there are among your Church friends who have that *joie de vivre* which was so noticeable among the early Christians ; especially among the middle-aged and eminently respectable, the people who ought to be commending the religion of Jesus Christ to the young, so that they can catch something of its beauty. The fact is that the most infectious thing about Christianity, which can only be caught, is generally lacking, and this has got to be changed. Change your mind—repent—if your Christianity doesn't include this quality, because hereby you are retarding the progress of the Kingdom of God.

But someone will say: "How can we be joyful when we see all the sorrow in the world, its pain, its slums, its appalling conditions for many of God's children?" It is a question which is often asked and it ought not to be, because it postulates the idea that if you are joyful you can never have sorrow in your heart as well. Did not the Apostle suggest that we shall be sorrowful, yet *always* rejoicing? It suggests, too, that a man who has real Christian joy in his heart is merely a breezy optimist who slurs over or forgets the seamy side of life, and it is miserably false. Yet the real Christian with joy in his heart will bring fresh hope to the sorrowful, alleviate the pain of those who suffer, bring light to those whose living is precarious and difficult. And so I suggest, for our thoughts this Lent, that we face the

facts of life, see them through the eyes of God ; that we get back to Christ, so that we may be able to recapture this vision for ourselves and the Church. Then our religion may once more become infectious, as it was in the early Christian Church when Christ risen and ascended really ruled in men's hearts.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST REQUISITE—A RIGHT IDEA OF GOD

Love has a hem to its garments
Which reaches the very dust.
It can touch the stains
Of the streets and lanes
And because it can, it must.

I THINK I can truly say that the most revolutionary change which has come to me since I was a young man is the change in my idea of God, and I should think that this is a fairly true statement of most men of our generation. When one thinks of the crude theories of the Atonement that one was taught when I was young, the idea that the Father's sense of wrath had to be appeased by the sacrifice of His only Son, or the idea of God as a sort of almighty potentate who could not be approached without some kind of grovelling and the offering of sacrifices, one wonders how Christianity has survived. Of course, one realises that this was all mitigated to a certain extent by talking of Jesus Christ as God and really looking upon Him as a better kind of god than God Himself; that is just what happened. The theology of the time, whether it meant to do so or not, really divorced the idea of God from Jesus Christ. Perhaps it was because so many theologians seem to have been legalists: the whole of God's dealing with man had to be formed into a legal system. But however it was, there is the truth, with its result that people not merely feared God but

were frightened by Him while they were able to love and adore Jesus Christ, so that you get a whole system shown up in a concrete form in a story which actually happened at the Front.

A certain man was going on leave for the first time after two years in the front line. Looking forward to it with all that excitement and expectation which only those who have been through it can know, and having got almost out of range of the smaller guns, he was mortally wounded by a long-distance gun in the back areas. His last words spoken to the chaplain were : " Isn't that just like God ? "—God, you see, the Almighty Fate, Who held out His blessings with one hand and then snatched them away at the last moment. Yet that man would never have said : " Isn't that just like Jesus Christ ? " And there are some to-day who have been brought up in orthodox Christianity, and who, it seems to me, have very similar ideas of God to that related in this story, and of course to have joy in such a God is unthinkable.

The God of Jesus Christ : that is what I am sure we have to get back to. So let us just try to see what this means. The first thing that it means is that God is Love. Jesus Christ spoke of Him as the Father and He told people of all types to look up to Him as Father. Of course, I suppose that if we were all perfect we should not worry about the personality of God. We should follow our Lord's saying that God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. But I am quite convinced from practical experience and, indeed, from my own experience, that we need to address Him in terms of personality ; and so, our Lord's reiterance of the word " Father " is both the simplest and the best for all of us. No doubt it is true to say that to

think of Him in terms of personality is not the same thing as thinking of Him as a Person, and that the doctrine of the Trinity guards us against this ; but for all practical purposes of teaching and trying to help ordinary men to worship and love God it is surely best to think and speak of Him in terms of personality by calling Him a Person. Those who are worried by anthropomorphic ideas of God should read Canon Streeter's *Reality*, where I feel they will get their worries laid to rest. May I add in passing that I have neither the ability nor the time to enter into philosophic ideas of God ; I am writing solely for the ordinary man or woman who is perhaps newly awaking to a sense of the necessity of God, and wants to know what an ordinary clergyman would try to say to him.

Now a father is one who loves his children personally and each one individually ; and all of us have the right to call God Father and expect him to deal with us as sons. We may be bad sons ; we may behave as if we were children of the devil, as Jesus said of the Pharisees ; but we are none the less still his sons and the relationship between us and him is the relationship of love, because He is Love.

Unfortunately we have only one word in our language to translate three different words in the Greek, and the consequence is that Love has become in some people's minds a question of sentimental feeling—in some ways a rather weak and sloppy kind of feeling, and this has done a great deal of harm. Christianity brought a new word into being ; a new word was coined to describe God, and that word is ἀγάπη, which, as we all know, is translated " charity " in the famous passage of St. Paul's in the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The other two Greek words which we translate " love " are φιλία, which is used of the emotions,

friendship, and so on, and ἔρως, which is connected with sex. For instance, it is well for us to remember that when Christ says, "Love your neighbour or your enemies," he does not use φιλέω, because it is not possible to command the emotions.[1] So, too, when we talk of loving God it does not *necessarily* imply that we must have some special emotional feeling towards Him.

How then can we define love in the sense in which we use it when we say that God is Love? It seems to me that love is an urge, a passion, which is always going out to the object which it loves. It is something which always wants to give itself, to serve, to create, and if need be to suffer; so that it may attain its object. And perhaps it might help us to define Christ's idea of God if, using St. Paul's description of love, we put "God" instead of charity. Let us look at it.

God is always long-suffering and kind; God knows no jealousy; God is never proud and does not stand on His dignity; God is always a gentleman and is never selfish; God never gets angry with people nor does anything but think the best of them; God is sorry when others go wrong but rejoices when He sees any spark of goodness; God is always slow to expose and eager to believe the best. He continually hopes the best of us and is always ready to suffer to win us to Himself.

God never fails.

Now isn't that very different from some of the ideas which we are apt to have about Him even to-day? For instance, the idea of God as judge. Don't we look upon Him as if He were continually weighing us in the balance and finding us wanting? Don't we often feel as if He were expecting us to do wrong and was looking out for

[1] He uses ἀγαπάω for this and for love for God too.

our faults? We have got it clearly fixed in our heads that there is a legal system behind God, and so we expect to be rewarded when we do right, punished when we do wrong. Thus, we have got away from the idea of God as our lover who always expects the best of us and is trying to draw out our good points and cover over our bad ones. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," as St. Paul says, which means, surely, that God tries to hide His people's sins rather than bring them into the light of day. He treats us as members of a family and not as people who come before Him in a law court; and, when we go wrong, directly he sees us beginning to return to His ways He comes forth to meet us. Then without asking us any questions or dwelling on the foolishness of our acts, takes us right back into the home and embraces us. Indeed, to make us sure that we may know that we are forgiven, He brings out all the best that He has and makes a feast in our honour. His forgiveness is free and absolute.

Here, again, are our ideas of forgiveness correct? I don't think I am far wrong when I say that most of us think we have to earn it. We think that His sense of justice has to be satisfied. I am sure that the parable of the Prodigal Son shows that that idea is wrong. The legal system deals with people as they are, but God deals with them as they may become. He is always seeking, seeking us out, and when we turn to Him the magnitude of our sin is no barrier to Him. He loves us so much that He takes us by the hand and leads us back into the home. It is the relationship of love, and that is why so many people cannot understand the teaching about the elder brother in that parable. The general in the war who said to me that it was an immoral parable was only expressing what a great many people think, because they

look upon it from the legal point of view, from the sense of justice to the elder brother. They cannot see that the home is not run on a legal system, and that if the elder brother had had anything of the love that his Father had in his heart he would have thought, not of his rights, but of the joy of getting his brother back. So we see that love is always out to win at whatever cost to itself, and the cost is great, for it is nothing less than the Cross itself. There is no real Love which hasn't got a cross in it.

Now, we all believe that Christ lived the life of love ; that is, He did the things which we believe were at one with what God would do, and from this we can see how God acts and what He is like. Let us consider one or two things.

I have said that love is always serving, giving itself. Jesus says : "I am among you as one that serveth." He also took a towel and He went down on His knees and washed the disciples' feet. God is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, but surely He fulfils His own being by always serving. Haven't we then got away from the God of Jesus Christ when we put Him up on a great white throne in the skies, and surround Him with all the paraphernalia of a sultan's throne ? Or when we put Him on a judgment seat in relation to us now ?

As He is love He must be down amongst men, serving, seeking, winning them, and His greatness consists not surely in His Almighty power so much as His creative love. Again, Jesus wins people to Him by suffering. Must we not then believe that there is suffering in the heart of God ? I think this was one of the aspects of God's character which was brought home to us in the war in a new way. I don't think we can altogether understand it, but I am sure Mr. Studdert Kennedy is right when he speaks of God's part as the hardest part.

To me it is one of the things which helps when dealing with suffering in the world more than anything else : to feel that God is not merely watching it but He Himself is down in it suffering with His children. And yet, I suppose a suffering God is very difficult for many to conceive, especially those who have been brought up to think of Him chiefly in terms of Almighty power and One Who is dealing out justice. But it seems to me impossible to escape it if we believe that God is like Jesus Christ.

> Love has a hem to its garments
> Which reaches the very dust.
> It can touch the stains
> Of the streets and lanes,
> And because it can, it must.

I think that this was one of the truths which we learnt afresh from Studdert Kennedy. But there is something to be added to his conception of a suffering God ; and I cannot do better than quote an illuminating comment recently made by the Archbishop of York[1] :

So the Cross became the centre of all Studdert Kennedy's faith in God. It was inevitable that his sensitive sympathy should make the problem of suffering a central mystery for his mind. In the Cross he found a clue to its solution. But it always seemed to me that he never quite mastered his own thought here. To him the supreme consolation was found in the thought that God also suffers. The Cross was for him no incident of our Lord's human experience only : it was the centre of the Gospel revelation of God. So far I am quite sure that he was right. . . . But I cannot help thinking that Studdert Kennedy did here what prophets so often bewilder men by doing ; he omitted to mention what he took for granted. For him the

[1] *G. A. Studdert Kennedy.* By His Friends. (Hodder & Stoughton). pp. 219 and 220.

great illumination came from the realization that God does not watch our agonies from afar, but suffers in and with His children. But if this is really all that can be said, suicide is the only reasonable course, or would be if we could only be sure that it procured annihilation. What makes the thought of suffering in God a comfort and inspiration is that the very Name of God stands for Power and Joy, so that to think of suffering as something real in Him is to think of the reality of suffering as swallowed up in the joyous victory of Love triumphant through sacrifice.

Yet it remains that Christ knew quite definitely, when He set His face to go to Jerusalem, that He was going to a very dreadful death. But His love—His service—was so great that He was ready to face anything for the sake of those He loved and served. No one, therefore, who takes love as his aim in life, which is in any sense compatible with the love of Jesus Christ, can talk of such love as being either sentimental or easy. In fact, there is no discipline so stern as that which love demands, and it is this love, this service, which is of the essence of God Himself. So, when we get back to the God of Jesus Christ we must see this side of Him as well. We get back, therefore, to what I said about Him before : that God fulfils His nature of love, is the great server, indeed the greatest server, for He Himself is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. It seems to me that He must fulfil His nature in a way similar to that of Jesus Christ ; that even He does not use force or Almighty power in any of His dealings with His children, but that He eternally tries to win them by love and service.

Of course this raises many problems. It raises the problem, for instance, of what happens to those who continually and constantly refuse to yield to His love. Will He go on eternally in a future life trying to win

them as He does here? I think that all one can say is that one does not know. Perhaps the most merciful theory is that of annihilation in the end; yet I think there can be no doubt that when men pass to a future life, men who have continually refused to see the highest, and enter that life with the same nature as they have built up for themselves here, then they will see what might have been; and that surely would be a sufficient hell for anyone. At any rate, it seems certain that there are some that do refuse, and whose hearts are so hardened and full of pride and self-satisfaction that they deliberately reject the highest when they see it, and whom even the love of God, compelling and enthralling as it is, does not move, but instead brings out more hatred, as it did in the case of the Pharisees.

It always seems to me that the best illustration of God's relationship with us is given in the story of "the Light of the World." A friend of the artist complained that there was a serious omission in the picture for he had put no handle on the door. The story goes that the artist smiled, and said it was one of the chief points of the picture; the only handle was a latch inside which only could be lifted from within. God stands outside the door of our hearts; He longs to get in; He goes on knocking, but He *cannot* force His way in; He respects our freedom too much; He can only come in when we of our own free will open the door to Him. If God will not force His way into our hearts in this life, is He likely to change when we pass to another life?

Well now, let us see if we can summarise this idea of God for ourselves. What does it mean for us? First, it means that our love for God is not primarily a thing of the emotions which can be called up at any given moment, but is a matter of definite choice, and the choice is made

because God has chosen us out Himself. It comes from Him first. We love because He first loved us. He, with His Almighty love and desire to serve, is always trying to impress Himself upon us : " Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." And this choice of God for us is for everyone. There is no favouritism with Him as we are all His children. He is the moving spirit all the time whether we listen or refuse, and it is when we see this love of God shown forth in Jesus Christ that we deliberately choose to follow Him. " We accept Christ," as the old phrase says, through seeing the wonderful greatness of God's love and the absolute futility of our lives without Him. We know it all comes from Him not from our own efforts, and we say, " Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy love I eling " ; the acceptance of the Love of God shown in Christ cleanseth us from all sin. This is what, I suppose, we call conversion, though I do not want to use the ordinary theological terms because they immediately conjure up theological questions in people's minds which are of great importance to the theologian but of none whatever to the ordinary man, and mean nothing to him. St. Paul was not converted until he saw the vision of Jesus Christ risen from the dead ; and he preached the Resurrection as proving love to be eternal in the heart of God. That, I think, we have got to get clearly in our minds : that because God is love He is always trying to impress Himself upon us, as has been so beautifully put by Francis Thompson in *The Hound of Heaven.*

The second thing it does is to show us how worthless the life of selfishness is ; a life lived without love, that is, without service. We feel somehow that we have missed the mark, and are not at one with the eternal purpose of the world. This missing the mark is another term for

sin, and I think that all sin can be traced to selfishness and has selfishness as its root. Repentance, then, is change of outlook on our whole view of life. We determine that we will do our best not to live for self, but to try and show something of that love which we have seen in God and we owe entirely to God in our own lives. Is not this what St. Paul means when he said "dying unto sin and living unto righteousness"?

Again, when we deliberately choose, we begin to feel ourselves at one with eternal truth, with eternal reality, and we know that we have thereby got fresh power not of ourselves. We have opened the door of our hearts and God has come in. We believe that God dwelleth in us; we believe it is He Who is always trying to work His purpose out in us and is giving us the power to do it. We know that we often fail and slip back into selfish and sinful deeds, and we know that this is because we have forgotten or lost hold of the knowledge of God's abiding in us. We need, therefore, to face life with something of the discipline and courage which is the essence of the life of Jesus Christ, and it seems to me that it must be deliberate self-discipline just as it must be deliberate choice. Haven't we got to be very careful of discipline imposed from without? No doubt it is very necessary for children up to a certain stage, but after that stage I think the discipline has to be definitely chosen by ourselves, even though it may have been suggested to us by someone else. "If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out," said Jesus Christ, and we know that we must do it because whatever is hindering us is stopping the flow of the love of God in our hearts.

But, someone will ask, surely this is making God into a sentimental Being and is certainly getting rid of the stern side of God's nature? The answer is: Let

us get back again to Jesus Christ. If we want to know what love is like we have got to go to Him, for He it was Who revealed it to mankind ; and we have seen that when He used the word Love He did not use the word which expresses the emotions, that is, He did not expect men to try to conjure up an emotional feeling towards God or their neighbour or their enemies ; yet He used the word we translate Love, and told us we must have it towards each of these. It was not a question of the emotions, but a question of choice, deliberate and real. He, as we believe, lived the life of Love, so we must go to Him to find out what the word means ; and surely the answer to that is clear : Love is "service." You cannot bring yourself to love with your emotions people whom you do not like or who have deliberately wronged you ; but you can set yourself to serve them and help them and forgive them when they become forgivable. And isn't this just what Jesus Christ did ? He was simply serving all the time, day and night. He went about doing good and sacrificing Himself for the sake of others. He did not deal with people in any foolish sentimental way. He showed that His love was a stern thing, a thing which required the utmost self-denial to carry out and very plain speaking to those who refused to see the truth. His attitude to the Pharisees, who were very religious people, has always seemed hard and uncompromising to some critics ; but surely it was the only attitude which could be of any possible use to people so hard and self-satisfied as they were. It was the only way in which He could show them that He was loving them, that is, serving them. They were so case-hardened that only the straightest talking could be of any use, just as it is now with any self-satisfied, proud or bigoted people ; and yet it was a service of love just as much as was the

parable of the Prodigal Son, or the healing of the sick of body and mind. Some people need to be wakened with dynamite, and Love used the only weapon it could—the weapon of really straight talking.

But His Love—His whole life of service—meant the sternest self-discipline. In the Temptation in the wilderness we see the discipline of thought; He had powers to use and He must think out how they could be used. Could they be used for His own needs? And the answer came after strenuous thought and prayer—No. Could they be used to force people to believe in Him? And again the answer was, No. Could they be used to extend God's Kingdom on earth? And the same answer came again. If one may say so with reverence, He beat His music out in such a way that it became clear to Him that the use of force or power to extend His message was incompatible with Love. Force might achieve immediate results, but could have no lasting effect; force is not a spiritual weapon and never can be; it is essentially the weapon of the world. His weapon, we come to see, was love and service, which would call out the self-respect in men that would make them join up of their own free-will and accord, and so become God's free children. Entrance to His Kingdom must ever be a matter of deliberate choice; there can be no conscripts in Christ's army, and we are as wrong with children as with those of mature age when we try to force them to believe.

So again there was the discipline of His whole life. Love and service are not simple or easygoing things. He gave His whole time, often without resting, sometimes without food. He did works of healing and mercy not as signs of His power—indeed He seems to have realised that they were often a hindrance rather than a help, and tried to keep people quiet about them—but because

He simply couldn't help serving and being of use even in such homely things as saving a host from being uncomfortable when they ran out of wine.

And this love took Him at last to the Cross. If He had used force the Cross would have been unnecessary ; but He knew that love was the right, the only way, and that if He used only love men would come to see that Love is the one great attribute of God, the one power which God uses and wants men to use, the one thing by which if they live they are working in union with God and His eternal purpose for His children. Now, in this Love is Joy ; even in the Cross itself, too. There is a joy in doing the right thing which no one can take from us ; others may think us fools, but if we believe we are doing something, however difficult, which is one with God's eternal purpose, we cannot be sad about it. And to have this joy our first requisite is to know God as One Who has joy and brings joy to the heart of His children.

And I maintain that if we get back to Christ and His ideas of God we do see the vision of a God Whom man can enjoy. We shall then get away from false ideas of God, which merely frighten us into an attempt to believe things about Him which are repellent to human reason ; and we shall scorn that saying of a famous schoolman, who said that one of the joys of the blessed will be to watch the tortures of the damned.

If there are things we cannot understand we shall be willing to wait until knowledge is given, but we shall always believe that God is love at its highest. We shall always believe that He cannot be false to His nature ; and in consequence we shall be able to " rejoice in the Lord always," knowing that He wants us to have this joy, and to see in Him the most beautiful, lovable, holy, merciful Person that we can imagine.

CHAPTER III

JOY IN GOD'S WILL

IF, then, we believe in the God of Jesus Christ, in a God Who is altogether lovable and Whose purpose for the world is the purpose of love, we shall naturally find joy in becoming one with His will. For joy surely comes from feeling one is doing the right thing in conjunction with others. That is at any rate the belief of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He said of our Lord : " Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross " ; that is, He found joy in just doing what He believed to be the right thing. It is also what our Lord felt, for He said : " My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me " ; and He talked to His disciples of the joy which no man could take from them ; so after His Ascension they went out and did what they believed was God's will, and they found a new joy which not only no one, and no persecution, and no hardship could take from them, but which was so radiant that people marvelled at it and wanted to know how they got it. But people have often imagined all sorts of things to be God's will and certainly have not found much joy in doing it. Let us look at this.

If God is Love, then God's Will is Good Will. Do you say, what a truism ? Wait a minute ; I don't think people have always thought so ; the things that have been put down to God's Will have often been far from

good ; in fact, they have been sometimes simply dreadful, and *still are*. And we have got to get it firmly rooted in our minds that God's Will is always good, so that we may be kept from attributing to God things which are not good. We may not be able to understand ; in fact, we often cannot understand why things happen and will not till we get to the further life, but we must not attribute bad things to God. We must be absolutely sure that because God is Love, His Will is Good Will. John Stuart Mill is surely not far wrong when he says : " I will call no Being good who is not what I mean by good when I use that word of my fellow-creatures ; and if there be a Being who can send me to his hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go." Now, if I stake my all on God being Love, then I must also do so on His Will being Good Will. Here is another way in which men's minds have changed ; plagues, pestilences, catastrophes, and war used to be put down to God's Will, and having been taught that they must be resigned to God's Will, they simply submitted. When I first went to South Africa, soon after the Boer War, our Government issued orders to the farmers to use certain spraying machines to kill locusts in the stage before they can fly ; but some of the old back-veld farmers absolutely refused because they said locusts were a scourge sent by God and you must not tamper with God's Will. If you have ever seen a farm after the locusts have finished with it you would realise that locusts are not things to be submitted to, but if possible destroyed. Nations pile up armaments, institute offensive and defensive alliances, magnify suspicions and live in fear of other nations, and when through the result of their preparation and their fear and suspicion war breaks out, they try to hoodwink the people by saying that there always will be war : " You can't

change human nature," that human nature which was the handiwork of God.

I used to know a working woman when I was a curate whose husband had killed himself with drink, and the poor thing's one plea was that it was God's Will. A friend of mine not long ago went to see a couple whose only child had been taken from them suddenly. They were sitting by the fire, and they told him they had been trying to rake up everything in their past lives to see what wrong they had done that God should take their child.

The things people will attribute to God are simply appalling. I still know some who have entirely given up their religion because, poor things, they say God ought to have saved their son in the war from the shell that killed him. God had failed them because their prayers had not been answered as they desired. In fact, this suggestion of resignation to God's Will has been used very largely as a soporific : " When in doubt or you can't understand anything, say it's God's will " is the sort of attitude people have taken up, and one consequence has been that whole streets have gone down with typhoid because people have meekly submitted to what they thought was God's Will when they ought to have been busy pulling up their drains. Do you say we are not so silly now ? People don't do those sort of things to-day ? Well, perhaps not, in the forms which now are ridiculous, because we have learned a little, but I know that a great many things *are* still attributed to God's Will which no one could call good, and that large numbers of people sit still and do nothing, because they feel they are to be resigned to God's Will when they ought to be helping God's Good Will to be done by fighting against the very evils to which they have resigned themselves. If we really believe that God's Will is always good when

we pray " Thy will be done," we shall feel we are singing a triumph song and will set ourselves to help, knowing we are at one with reality. Compare the old hymn, " My God, my Father, while I stray," with Frederick Mann's hymn which you have probably heard over the wireless, and you will see the difference ; the latter breathes the right spirit, the spirit not merely of sitting down to things as they are, but the spirit of courageously facing life and doing all to make things better. " Faith shouts in triumph, Love must win, Thy will be done." Bad things must be swept aside so that Love can do its perfect work, and we must help to do it because we believe that God's Will is Good Will.

Here is the new version of " Thy will be done " :

My God, my Father, make me strong,
When tasks of life seem hard and long,
To greet them with this triumph song—
Thy Will be done.

Draw from my timid eyes the veil,
To show, where earthly forces fail,
Thy power and love must still prevail,
Thy Will be done.

With confident and humble mind,
Freedom in service I would find,
Praying through every toil assigned,
Thy Will be done.

Things deemed impossible I dare,
Thine is the call and Thine the care,
Thy wisdom shall the way prepare,
Thy Will be done.

All power is here and round me now,
Faithful I stand in rule and vow,
While 'tis not I but ever Thou ;
Thy Will be done.

Heaven's music chimes the glad days in,
Hope soars beyond death, pain and sin,
Faith shouts in triumph, Love must win,
Thy Will be done.

Anyone who studies the life of Jesus is, I think, bound to come to one conclusion, namely, that He was eminently human. The phrase is not easy to define, yet everyone knows what it means ; " he is so human " is a description which all of us would like to feel could be said of us. Of course, like all other phrases, it can be debased and used in a shallow, sentimental manner, but all the same it is one of the outstanding characteristics of our Lord and no one can call Him a sentimentalist. Now I think the phrase, taken at its highest, indicates what man ought to be ; he must be at all costs human, and when he is, he approaches to the Divine ; we see Humanity at its highest in Jesus Christ, and it gives us not merely a picture of man as he was meant to be by God and an ideal for us to aim at, but also shows us qualities which must be in God Himself. Isn't it then an extraordinary fact that one of the accusations levelled against religion and religious people is that they are so inhuman ? This requires a little examination, because if our religion makes us that, there must be something wrong with our religion, and we do need to repent, to " change our outlook." Have you ever thought what an inhuman God has been put before people ? John Stuart Mill's protest I have quoted is not a bit too strong. If God is less good than we see goodness in men, we couldn't possibly worship Him ; we could have no joy in Him. And it is very wrong merely to say, " Oh yes, but God's ways are past finding out," and use that as an excuse for behaviour you wouldn't tolerate in a man. I call that sheer cowardice, and it is generally the refuge of the " superior " person.

We don't expect to know everything about God by any means ; we know that He sees things whole while our view is but very partial ; we are sure that because He sees them whole, all is very good and that through all the suffering and sin in the world He discerns the joy. But we do feel there is a possibility of justifying the ways of God to men, and we cannot believe that He is in any way what we term "inhuman." The most inhuman things have been done in the name of God chiefly because men's ideas of God were inhuman ; and what worries me is that they are being done to-day for the same reason. Inquisition and torture, burning at the stake and other iniquitous things, perpetrated by both sides at the time of the Reformation, were carried out because men seriously and wholeheartedly believed that God approved. Their idea of God was frankly "inhuman" ; and similar things are being done in a lesser degree to-day in the name of religion for the same reason. If you believe that God uses force to bring in His Kingdom—a thing which Christ refused to do—you will feel justified in speaking of a Holy War, and in compelling men to become Christians against their will. If you believe God is inhuman enough to damn people who have no chance in this life, you will not be surprised at finding other inhumanities in Him. If you believe that His Will is not good will but arbitrary and even inhuman, you will become inhuman too, and take joy in doing things to others which no decent man in his senses would do—the sort of things which are done in religious persecutions and wars too often in the name of God. No, if God's Will is not Good Will, if it shocks one's highest sensibilities, then I have no time for such a God and can find no joy in trying to do His Will. But if His Will is Good Will, lead where it may through suffering or pain or loss or

sorrow, I know there is joy there too, because He, the good, the beautiful, the true is with me through it all. I may not know why, but I will try to find out and believe that as He is Love, and Human in its highest sense, His Will is always good. Therefore, reader, may I suggest that it is well to think over your actions to others ; if you are able to do inhuman things to others without a qualm, to say spiteful things about people with whom you disagree, to judge the actions of others without knowing the facts, as if you were omniscient ; if you feel yourself free to condemn others to poverty and evil conditions and surroundings because you don't happen to be poor yourself ; to say that business is business, meaning that you cannot bring the human touch into business ; to refuse to take any action to help to rescue fallen women, or worse still, to kick them yourself still further down the ladder because you feel that it is only human nature after all ; to shut yourself up in your own little circle and your own little interests, and there forget the great mass of struggling human beings who need your help ; to keep your Christianity to yourself and your parish, and fail to remember the vast numbers of people throughout the world to whom Christianity would bring new life and hope and peace ; if, I say, your religion allows you to be inhuman in any of your actions, may I suggest that maybe there is something wrong with your idea of God, or your belief in what God wants of you, and that the only solution is repentance or change of outlook ?

CHAPTER IV

THE JOY OF THE SEEKER

DON MIGUEL DE UNANUMO finishes his most interesting, though by no means easy, book, called *The Tragic Sense of Life*, with this exhortation : " Reader, . . . may God deny you peace but give you glory."

It sounds rather dreadful, doesn't it ? Surely religion is meant to give you a comfortable feeling inside, to make you feel respectable because you put on your best Sunday clothes and go to church, where it is pleasant to preen yourself before God ; or is it before your neighbour ? Surely, if we are regular in our communions or our prayer meetings, the last thing we ought to feel is uncomfortable. I wonder if you think that ?

Well, do you realise that many of the critics of religion look upon it as dope, a kind of soporific to keep things easy for people who are satisfied, and to prevent others from rising up and crusading against the social wrongs in the world ; these critics see people wasting their energy and their time on their shibboleths and petty little details of conduct and ritual, and even of faith which really don't matter at all, yet thought by some of us to be more important than loving justice and serving our fellows ; and to our shame the critics are often right. We settle down with our religion into a quiescent state ; we and it become almost comatose ; and that old Spaniard

has a message for us when he says, may God deny you peace. If peace means the acceptance of things as they are, if it means only a quiet life and no worries, if it allows folding the hands and shutting the eyes to the misery around us, may God indeed deny us peace, and may someone put moral dynamite under us to destroy so false an idea of Christianity. There is no Christian joy to be found in such a life, and the sooner we realise it the better, not only for ourselves but for the cause of Christ ; as Studdert Kennedy sang :

" Peace does not mean the end of all our striving,
Joy does not mean the drying of our tears,
Peace is the power that comes to souls arriving
Up to the light where God Himself appears.
Joy is the wine that God is ever pouring
Into the hearts of those who strive with Him,
Light'ning their eyes to vision and adoring,
Strengthening their arms to warfare glad and grim."

That brings us, then, to the thought of the joy which comes from seeking, the joy which radiates in the heart of God the seeker. Do you know that poem, " In a Fair Garden," by T. E. Brown, a Manx poet who has never had his full tribute ?

" In a fair garden
I saw a mother playing with her child,
And, with that chance beguiled,
I could not choose but look
How she did seem to harden
His little soul to brook
Her absence—reconciled
With after boon of kisses,
And sweet irrational blisses.
For she would hide

With loveliest grace
Of seeming craft
Till he was ware of none beside
Himself upon the place;
And then he laughed,
And then he stood a space
Disturbed, his face
Prepared for tears;
And half-acknowledged fears
Met would-be courage, balancing
His heart upon the spring
Of flight—till, waxing stout,
He gulped the doubt.
So up the pleached alley
Full swift he ran;
Whence she,
Not long delayed,
Rushed forth with joyous sally
Upon her little man.
Then was it good to see
How each to other made
A pretty rapture of discovery.

Blest child! blest mother! blest the truth ye taught—
God seeketh us, and yet He would be sought."

It is a parable, isn't it? The child's fear of loneliness, the courage to face it and go in search of the one who loves him, he knows, and the mother hidden indeed, but only so that her son may find her once again.

Yes, a parable of God's relationship with His children; they have got to learn to stand on their own feet, and to have courage to seek Him, and yet all the time He is seeking them and trying to reveal Himself to them. So here are two thoughts—God seeketh us, and yet He must be sought.

We have tried to see that our relationship with God

and our fellow-men is the relationship of the home and not the law courts, that this is the Christian relationship, and that it needs emphasising because too many people's religious lives are ruled by a legal system in which God is a Judge rather than a Father, an idea fatal to drawing out love for Him or their fellow-men. Not long ago an eminent judge published a book in which he quite definitely sets out to show how our common law of England ought to be brought more into line with the teaching of Christ. He says : " The current mentality of the law in my own time has been distinctly Old Testament. Now I take it that the Master, whilst accepting all that was good in the old commandments and the teaching of the prophets, added to these bases of right conduct the 'new commandment,' as St. John calls it, 'Love one another.' " Then the writer sets out to find how far our Law can be made more like the Gospel, especially in its relation to the poor.

That may sound strange to some of you, but how much more strange it sounds when one finds that some people's Christianity is not Christianity at all, for their religion is of the Old Testament rather than of the Gospels. So we must get back to the God of Jesus Christ, the Father, the Lover of men Who is seeking His children, seeking you and me, and goes on seeking and won't be put off seeking even when we turn our backs on Him and try to forget Him.

Can you tell me why it is that our consciences make us uncomfortable when we do the mean, nasty or dirty trick to our neighbour ? Isn't it because God the Seeker and Lover of men is trying to get us back to the Home where we shall serve our neighbour as He wants us to ?

And have you ever thought that God is seeking you

because you are His child, because He wants your love, and because He wants your help ?

That is the most wonderful thing. He seeks men down the ages to help Him to build the Kingdom of God, that is to make Love reign in the world, to get men to see that His way of Love and Sacrifice is the only way to the Brotherhood of mankind. So He wants you and He wants me, so that we, having seen this vision, can pass it on to someone else, for then you will try to love your neighbour as yourself, that is, to do to others what you would like them to do to you. If you see that he has sought you out and brought you to see the greatness of Love, inspired by Him Who is the Lover of men, you will be a lover of men too ; you will look on others, not as people to be exploited, or fought, or despised, or kicked further down the ladder, but as fellow-sons of God to be helped and encouraged and lifted up out of the mire of selfishness. Yes, He seeketh us to help Him do His work, and too often instead of helping Him we sit tight and expect Him to do miracles to save us trouble ; we say God will put things right, cure diseases and the slums, abolish war and injustice and so on, and we do nothing, and nothing happens ; for God does not work miracles to save us trouble. But He does work miracles through us, through unselfishness and suffering bravely borne and through forgiveness and kindliness in people which wins others to His side. *Through us* He binds up the broken-hearted, *through us* He brings deliverance to the captives, *through us* He comforts those that mourn, *through us* He proclaims the new age for the world ; that *through us* is really wonderful when we realise its meaning, and the glorious privilege of working with God.

But I am sure we too often leave *things to God and do*

nothing, when we ought to be helping Him to put things right. So He seeketh us, continually, persistently, individually ; God seeks you to make you a minister of love to others, to cheer someone's heart, to give a helping hand or a word of encouragement. We can all do these things, even the youngest and least talented of us, that is the wonderful part of it, and when we obey we are working with God.

He seeks us ; but yet He must be sought. Life is a Quest ; we must be seekers after truth : the idea that religion is the acceptance of certain truths and requires no effort on our part seems to me clean contrary to our Lord's teaching ; when He told us to follow Him He surely knew, as He said, that it was not a call to an easy life. He called it taking up the Cross ; but He also knew that following Him requires continual thought ; it *was not always easy even for Him* to know God's Will, as the Agony in the Garden shows ; and if so, how much more difficult for us ! Life is always a quest to do the right thing and to know the truth.

Haven't you found it so ? I have. Haven't you known what it is to doubt if God is really Love, to doubt if He really cares for all His children, to wonder why some great soul has been stricken down in the midst of a useful life, to be distressed with all the suffering, the sin, the seemingly blatant triumph of evil in the world ?

I am sure you have. Then must we sit down and merely accept it, and never ask the reason why ? Surely no ; we have to be seekers to find the Truth, which means seekers after God, and I think we have to get what help we can from those who have really been up against it.

May I suggest, therefore, that you do not worry because you have doubts ; we all have them at times,

appalling doubts which hurt and worry us, and yet I am sure there would be something wrong if I felt I was always right or always sure. To be in doubt must certainly make us all the more keen to search out the Truth. "Seek and ye shall find," our Lord said quite definitely, and everyone who does seek knows that it is true. We don't learn everything, but we learn more and more as time goes on. Look for God in nature and in history and in your fellow-men and He reveals Himself to you just because you are a seeker.

"He seeketh us and yet He would be sought" and He seems to me to say, "Are you worried, or anxious? Are you thinking of giving up the fight because it is so hard? Are you lonely or sad? Then remember I am seeking you, to make you one with Me. I am close at hand. You are My child. I will never leave you nor forsake you nor let you go; you may be far from home; you very likely think you are not good enough, but I want you because you are My child; I want you because I want your love; I want you also to help me bring in My Kingdom of Love by fighting selfishness and wrong in yourself and others and proclaiming Love as the only salvation of the world, and above all living it, as far as you can."

And in this you will find "glory," which is only another term for joy; you may be denied peace, at any rate the peace which is a soporific and a sham, but you will find life is worth while for you will be at one with God's purpose for the world which is the Victory of Love.

CHAPTER V

THE JOY OF THE WORKER

IT is an interesting and somewhat surprising fact that I have received quite a number of letters after Broadcast Services from people objecting to my emphasising the fact that God is our Father. "What use is it to me," they say, "to be told to look upon God as a Father, when my father fails to produce an atom of respect in my mind," and then follows a list of father's failings. Of course, the answer is clear, that they must take the ideal Father, the best sort of Father they would like to have as their guide; but the fact that the question is asked does make one sit up and take notice, doesn't it? —especially if one happens to be a very human, not to say feeble, father oneself, because one has so little time to devote to one's children.

Now I heard the same sort of thing being discussed a few days ago at a Conference; one man went so far as to say that in view of the fact that young people were supposed to lack respect for their parents—a highly debatable point I maintain—we might be well advised to change some of our illustrations about God.

Of course, this probably sounds very far-fetched to some of you, but I am telling you of it because of a further remark by a very well-known Padre, who was present, which may seem even more incongruous, but which I believe has a good deal more in it than might at first

appear ; he said, "Well, I believe we would do well to talk of God as the Good Employer."

No doubt this name at first thought may send the cold shivers down the spines of some people, but if that is so, then are you not, like my correspondents about the Fatherhood of God, judging the term because you have, or know of, bad employers ?—and is there not a truth behind the idea of God as an employer, which even religious people are sometimes apt to forget ?

I think you know me well enough not to think that I am likely to belittle the word Father for God, for, in fact, I think it is the only adequate description of Him, just as it is our Lord's own word ; and let me say at once that I am not going to draw any conclusions which will lead us back to the bad old days when God was represented as a Terror, or an Eastern Potentate, or as an impossible Autocrat.

For a good employer must surely have some, at least, of the best characteristics of a Father.

He will realise the responsibility which is his in dealing with those he employs ; he will look upon them as being under his care while in his employ ; he will try to help and encourage them to do their best and develop the powers they have ; he will stir up the lazy ones and if possible shame them into doing better ; he will do his utmost to train and encourage the young ones and protect them from the dangers which lack of knowledge or carelessness may bring ; he will treat them as human beings like himself, and not merely as hands or machines, and so will get the best work out of them as well as loyalty to himself ; and he will understand that by giving them reason to know they are partners with him—fellow-workers in a great undertaking, the work will be done more quickly and with less friction. No doubt

other characteristics of a good employer being like a Father will occur to you if you think them out.

So I give you two thoughts which arise out of the thought of God as a good Employer.

1. That God is always *working*.

I suppose there are few people to-day who would accept the old idea of creation as literal, that God worked six days and then rested ; it was no doubt an excellent incentive to keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week, and making everyone rest ; but our Lord has two remarks on it which are worth remembering, and He is our final Authority.

He said " the Sabbath was made for man," and surely implied that one day's rest in seven is a natural law which man breaks at his peril and therefore is a Divine law since men are God's children.

And He also said, " My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

Yes, God is no longer, as we used to think in my young days, the passive potentate, sitting on a great white throne, watching His creatures toiling here below. He is Love, which can't be passive, but which must go on creating and working, energising so as to be true to His Name ; God is working His purpose out ; and the idea of God as passive, as an old man remote in the skies, has done harm not least in this, that it makes Him inhuman.

You cannot think of Him as either old or remote if you remember that He is working His purpose out down here with us, and yes—I am bold to say it—employing us to help Him work His purpose out too. For St. Paul says we are " workers together with Him."

Every one of us has some work, however small it may be, to do in God's garden to bring in His Kingdom, and

until man is doing it he is not at one with God. So I contend that if we have seen the vision of God in Jesus Christ, He is both Father and Employer and He is expecting those who know Him to help Him do His work.

This brings me to my other thought—

2. That we are God's employees. Our Lord's story of the man who wrapped His talent up in a napkin, and did nothing with it, the man who did no harm but simply did nothing with what his master had given him, is sufficient to show what I mean. It simply means that God expects us to do our bit ; to help forward His work, to proclaim His good news by following the life of love and unselfishness in the steps of Jesus Christ, and in daily union with Him. God is always trying to impress Himself upon us ; He wants us to see that there is a purpose, a good purpose—His purpose in the world ; and if we believe this is true we are false to our best selves if we fail to help.

Now, if we think this out we shall see that other analogies will follow ; some of us " down tools " not for some good cause but simply for selfish ends, others " ca-canny," either to keep prices up or to keep them down, and yet think that they are playing the game.

And there are the " idle rich," those, that is, who see no necessity to do anything but please themselves because they happen to have inherited God's gifts and are quite comfortable—the drones in God's Kingdom ; the self-satisfied, and the proud, the people who prey upon their fellow-men, the men who take God's gifts and use them on themselves.

God's employees ; does it sound startling to you ? That doesn't matter ; what does matter is, is it true ? If it be true, where do we stand in the category ? That is the question. Will you think it out ?

God works. Jesus gave His life on the Cross, working to show men what God is like and to enlist them in His service, serving and loving men all the time. He calls you and me to do the same—to do our bit to spread love and unselfishness, and to throw out greed and sin. Our bit may be a small one, amongst just our own circle of friends, but it is more important than we think, for it is the bit of the garden God wants us to try to make beautiful.

Are we workers in God's garden ?

I think it cannot be illustrated better than it is by Mr. Rudyard Kipling in a poem called, "England, the Glory of the Garden" ; I won't quote it all, but perhaps these verses will help us if we think of the Garden as God's world and the Head Gardener as God.

And there you'll see the gardeners, the men and 'prentice boys
Told off to do as they are bid and do it without noise ;
For, except when seeds are planted and we shout to scare the birds,
The Glory of the Garden it abideth not in words.

And some can pot begonias and some can bud a rose,
And some are hardly fit to trust with anything that grows ;
But they can roll and trim the lawns and sift the seed and loam,
For the Glory of the Garden occupieth all who come.

There's not a pair of legs so thin, there's not a head so thick,
There's not a hand so weak and white nor yet a heart so sick,
But it can find some needful job that's crying to be done,
For the Glory of the Garden glorifieth everyone.

Then seek your job with thankfulness and work till further orders,
If it's only netting strawberries or killing slugs on borders ;
And when your back stops aching and your hands begin to harden,
You will find yourself a partner in the Glory of the Garden.

You will notice "the Glory of the Garden glorifieth everyone."

Every man who tries humbly to do his bit in the garden finds a glory and a joy which no one and no circumstances in life can take away. The word "glory" is something which thrills and makes light the burdens and the pain of life; it never yet came to us through any selfish, mean or ignoble act; but it does come to everyone who is trying to do their bit and show love in their everyday life.

Then again, "you will find yourself a partner in the Glory of the Garden."

Yes, our employment is the best that can be had, it is co-partnership; God's partners. Is there anything grander than really knowing that however feeble we are, we are playing our part in working with God to make this old world fit for His children for all time and to hear Him say when we pass over, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?

God's partner! I don't think I know a more outstanding instance than one who has passed to the fuller life last year; a great man and a prophet and truly—in the wonderful work he did for Christ and His children—God's Partner; one beloved and known to many through the war as Woodbine Willie. "He being dead yet speaketh"; listen to his words written in my office in Boulogne just after the Armistice, 1918:

IT IS FINISHED[1]

It is finished! It is finished! As the sun sinks down to rest,
And the sky burns blood and amber in the wonder-weaving West,
Where the clouds make golden islands like the Islands of the Blest,
For the day is nearly done.

[1] From "The Unutterable Beauty" the collected poetry of G. A. Studdert Kennedy. (Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. 6d.).

But another day is dawning as the wingèd darkness flies,
And the silver stars keep sentry till another sun shall rise,
For the daylight is eternal, and the sunshine never dies,
It is always marching on.

It is finished ! It is finished ! For the Saviour crucified,
See the soldiers stand in silence where the cruel crowds have cried,
E'en the broken-hearted mother has departed from His side,
For His day is nearly done.

But an empty tomb is awaiting, and the East is silver grey,
As the angels of the morning trumpet in another day,
See the wounded God go walking down the world's eternal way,
For His task is never done.

There's an army thronging round Him as He takes the road to-night,
Can't you see your sons and brothers lined before Him left and right ?
Can't you hear their voices calling you to join the host and fight
For the God who marches on ?

CHAPTER VI

THE JOY OF COMMUNION

IN the last chapter we tried to see not only that God is eternally working—that creation is still going on—but also that we are workers with God if we are trying to fulfil our character as sons of God, and this quite naturally leads us on to the necessity of communion with Him. No one can really be a worker with Him who does not keep in constant touch with Him so that they may not only get His power but know what the job is He wants them to do. If He is working to a plan—and no one can doubt that the great Architect of the Universe is doing this whether it be in regard to the Universe or to men's lives—we, His workmen, must be working to the same plan and trying to find out what it is. Each of us has a special bit of work to do and we surely can't find out what it is unless we keep in constant touch with Him. This is what is meant by being "spirit-led"; and it entails constant and very serious hard thinking.

There are few joys so really great as the joy of finding out what God's plan is for us and realising that we are building on it. It may be quite a small bit of work; it may seem very ordinary and without much inspiration. With a vast number of people it is almost certainly just running their home well, or doing the job conscientiously, or playing the game by their relations and their neighbours. When these things are done, as the saying is, to the glory of God, that is, as a trust which God

gave us for our portion, we are doing a bit of service which we feel we are here for ; for, as Toc H says, service is the rent we pay for our room on God's earth. It is God's plan for us if we are really trying to live the life of love and service in union with God, and are showing His love in our relations with our neighbours, however humble or humdrum our position in life may seem.

Two things are necessary, first to believe that God is trying to reveal Himself and His plan, not merely to the world and the Church, but to you yourself individually ; and secondly to think, and go on thinking and to keep thinking all the time—an interest in life which is vital—so that He may be able to show us the answer to our question : "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" Because, let there be no doubt about it, there is always an extra bit of work we can do for Him. Now it is a curious thing, that for many people the last thing they want to do in regard to their religion is to think. In this one thing even a north countryman will not mind being told what to do and will do it without resentment ; in fact, so many people prefer not to think about their religion that one great section of Christianity makes it part of its policy, and no doubt it has its uses. It is the policy of the Army :

> Theirs not to reason why ;
> Theirs but to do or die,

and there can be little doubt that with certain people it works, though it is curious how often this is the only department in life in which they will accept authority and do as they are told without a question.

But we have determined to try to return to the lessons of Christ, and to see what it is He says about it ; and it

seems to me that it is clear the one thing He kept saying was "Think." He told the people homely yet profound parables and stories which were quite useless to them unless they thought them out. He must have done it purposely. He knew that if the stories disturbed them, then they would have to think. He wanted them to be seekers after God; only those who had ears to hear would hear what God was saying to them. He did not treat men as children, and lay down rules for them to obey; He gave them principles which they had to work out for themselves. It is quite remarkable how few rules our Lord laid down outside the positive commands to love God and our neighbours; so few, in fact, are they, that once or twice when He seems to have made rules, one is led to wonder whether they are really His, or whether they were added by His reporters. He also promised us that when we did try to work out His principles, either collectively or individually, we should find the Spirit of God was helping us all the time. "He will guide you into all the truth." And truth is not limited to religious truth. So it seems to me it is incumbent on us all to think out our lives, to get all the help we can from others who have lived near to God as their lives have shown, and remember that when we are trying to do this the Spirit of God is near us; in fact, we are holding communion with God; that is, we are praying. For this reason I am not frightened by the evident chariness of young people, who refuse to accept authority without question. I see, in the fact that they are inclined to doubt, a desire to make a firmer faith their own by beating their music out; and I find from a considerable experience among young people since the war—and let us remember that it was the war and all it meant for civilisation, and also for Christianity,

which largely caused their questioning of our standards —that they do make their faith their own ; and I believe it will stand the test of time far better than the mere acceptance of truths which they are told to believe because we older people have believed them. They want, these young people, to know the reason why, even about the most sacred things which some of us accepted without thought ; and while we sometimes may have to tell them we don't know the reason, we can take them back to Christ, and assure them that if they will try to lead the Christ life—the life of love for God and their neighbour—they will know one day, if not here, then in the future life, "If any man will do His will he shall know the teaching," and that this desire to know is the spirit of God moving in them.

I find it very amusing sometimes to see the look of astonishment on their faces when I have to confess I do not know the answer to some of their conundrums, for they appear to think that a parson is supposed to know everything ; or at least should not admit his ignorance. Unfortunately, in the eyes of the world, we are "know-alls," or, rather, they suppose we like to be thought that ; yet we are but seekers, too. There it is. When we get back to Christ, we find that He is continually saying : "Think," and thought is a very real part of Prayer ; in fact, I would say there is a great deal more real praying done by people thinking out their lives and their difficulties and how to overcome them than by people saying prayers on their knees with very little thought behind their appeals to God. Of course, there are many different types of prayer, and some suit one temperament which are of very little help to others, but whatever form of it is most helpful to us must continually bring us to *thinking* of how God's name can be hallowed,

God's will be done, and God's Kingdom come on earth, and how we are helping Him to do it. Prayer is the means by which we become at one with God and therefore receive His Power ; we open the door, and *Love* steps in and sits down at our table, and begins talking to us. We see how splendid He is, and what a delightful companion ; and we realise that although so wonderful He is really pleased to be asked and welcomed. So we ask Him to tell us about Himself, and what He is trying to do ; and as He talks and we listen, we become conscious that He wants us to help Him. At first we almost laugh at the thought, we know how inadequate we are, how futile and weak, but we soon see that He not only means it, but that He really believes in us, believes that we *can* help Him, and the thought gives us fresh heart ; we ask Him what we can do.

His answer is quite short, but always the same : just "Follow Me"—follow Love. "Come with Me," and I will give you life ; rich, abundant life in which you will always be giving yourself, and through that finding more life. He does not say it is easy ; He does not offer pleasure ; He offers joy in doing, which is a much greater thing. Follow Me, He says ; follow Love. You, too, must carry the cross. Take up this burden for love, and you are pledged to be always giving, to be helping others, carrying other people's burdens, forgetful of self ; but, if you do this, you will find Life, abundant Life ; and you will find Me always with you.

May I here put in two words of caution ? There is this one. Because we have got to think and keep thinking what God's will is and how we can go on doing it, this does not mean we have to be frightfully intellectual or "highbrow" ; not being an intellectual person myself, I admire and love to talk to intellectual people, and they

are able to explain to me much that I do not understand, and I thank God for their clear and well-balanced minds. They often help us to see God in new ways, and to see the glory of God's beauty in nature and art and science ; they have a great gift to impart to others which can be very much to the glory of God and the good of His children. But many of us haven't got this ability ; we cannot even think connectedly, and it would be a dreadful thing if Christianity were only for intellectual people ; but it certainly is not. "I thank Thee, O Father," said our Lord, "that Thou hast revealed these things unto babes." So long as we really try to think, so long as we are always ready to learn and keep on the look-out for fresh truth which God is trying to teach us as we walk along the road with Christ, trying to please Him, He does reveal new things to us, and show us new jobs we can do for Him.

The second warning is about "feeling." How often people are intensely worried because they cannot, as they say, feel the Presence of God with them either in Church or at their devotions, or at other times. But is it necessary ? If the joy of communion came only through *feeling* that God was with us, I have little doubt that vast numbers of us would get very little joy in communion with God at all. You see, our emotions are not altogether under our control. Some people no doubt are able to *feel* the presence of God with them at special times, and a few like Brother Lawrence can do so at all times. But I am quite sure it is disastrous to think that the joy of communion with God—of knowing that He is with us—depends upon our being able to feel Him near. I don't think I ever try to do so ; it is a question not of feeling but of faith ; we know He is with us ; we have proved it in the past ; without feeling anything we have

had enlightenment, or courage, or a fresh desire to serve Him vouchsafed to us, and we know it came from a power which is not our own ; we are sure without having had any feeling at all. So if you cannot feel God near, I suggest you do not worry about it, but just go on believing that He is with you all the same. You will find that :

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

Mere affirmations, some people may say. Yes, but if you think of it, most of our common decisions in life are but unconscious affirmations of faith. Affirmations are valuable as a preliminary to Prayer. Mr. Studdert Kennedy used to start all his mission services in Croydon with the following affirmation ; perhaps, if you do not know them, they may be useful to some of you ; they can be obtained on a card from the Industrial Christian Fellowship :

O my God, I believe
That Thou art good and great, perfect in wisdom and in love,
And that Thou lovest me.

O my God, I believe
That Thou art present here, in all Thy power and in all Thy love,
Ready to answer my prayer.

O my God, I hope
To be made perfect,
Wholly free from sin.

O my God, I hope
To see Thee face to face, with all Thy Saints,
Without sin and without shame.

O my God, I love Thee,
Not as I ought to, not as I want to,
But Thou, Who knowest all things, knowest the sin and the shame of my heart.
Thou knowest that I love Thee,
Grant me grace to love Thee more.
For Jesus Christ's sake.
Amen.

There is no question of trying to rouse one's feelings in that ; it is a practical application of faith, hope and love. It is like the continual utterances of St. Paul ; I *know*—I am *persuaded*—and if one can say these with all sincerity one need not worry about what one can or cannot feel.

Prayer then in its broadest sense is the opening of the door of the heart to God so that He can come in, and it can be done at any time, or in any place ; in fact, unless we can do it at any time and in any place we cannot know its full value and power. This is why teaching, which seems to limit it to either Church or definite times of devotion, is quite contrary to the Spirit of Christ ; we desperately need to be able to lift up our hearts to Him at all times and in all places and to know that His Presence is vouchsafed to us then just as much as at any other time, not excluding the most sacred moments of communion.

But all the same, the vast majority of us do need to make special appointments with God. There is a well-known text in Amos which says in our Authorised Version : " How can two meet together unless they are agreed ? " I often wondered what it really meant (for surely two people can meet pretty definitely to fight !) until I read Professor Adam Smith's interpretation, which made the words read, " How can two meet together unless they have made an appointment ? " and showed that it

referred to two people trying to meet each other in the broad expanses of the desert or the veld. So I believe it is necessary for us to have special appointments with God ; if we leave it to casual appointments I think it is the experience of most people that they get less and less, and dwindle down to none. Our Lord's example is a case in point. If He couldn't find time through the enormous insistency of His work to get alone with God, He definitely and deliberately made time at night or in the early hours of the morning ; He knew that even He could not do without that communion ; was it not partly this which prompted Him to exhort His disciples on that last solemn evening to "do this in remembrance of Me"? It is quite impossible to write of the joy of communion without dealing at some length with the Holy Communion service, because for many of us the joy to be had here is the very centre of the religious joy of life. Nothing helps us so much to realise Christian joy as this, because here we believe we come into closest communion with our Lord ; and again it is not merely a question of feeling but of faith, of knowledge. And I believe Christ gave it to us just because He knew our sometimes feeble faith needed this possibility of knowledge. He gave us an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace ; a surety that He does come and dwell in our hearts by faith.

> Here O my Lord I see Thee face to face ;
> Here faith would touch and handle things unseen ;
> Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace
> And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Now what I always feel about the Holy Communion service is that it is possible to miss the wood for the trees. There are so many beautiful things in it, so many aspects

of truth, so many different ways of looking at it, that sometimes we may forget its central life.

I know I am treading on thin ice here, because attempts to explain the Holy Communion service have most unfortunately divided Christians more than any of the doctrines of the Christian Faith. I can only explain what I feel myself about it, because I have found it has been a help to others. No doubt for some it will damn my book entirely for its inadequacy, but I do it quite deliberately because I hope and pray it may be a real help to some of you.

To understand the Holy Communion one must naturally go back to the Upper Room and to the Institution itself by our Lord, and still further I think to first services of Holy Communion held by the disciples themselves after the Ascension.

Imagine them there in the Upper Room itself (quite possibly in the house of John Mark's mother, the house where we are told St. Peter went to the night he was delivered from the prison); anyhow, in all probability the same upper room used on that memorable occasion. They are all assembled together "to do this in remembrance of" Him. What would be uppermost in their minds? Would it not be that He was present with them, just as much as if He had been there in person? Had not His teaching led up to this "where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of you?" He had promised His Presence; surely here was a special time when it would be given. So I believe it has been down the ages; and if anyone asks me why I go to Holy Communion I answer: "I go to meet Jesus with His disciples."

But, someone will ask at once, do you mean that you would limit His Presence to this occasion?

Surely not. Thank God I can meet Him at all sorts of times and in all sorts of places ; I can meet Him if I have eyes to see in the street and the market-place, in the fields and on the sea, and because I meet Him at Holy Communion it is probably easier for me to see Him elsewhere too. But here is a special opportunity, an opportunity He gave Himself because He knew how weak our faith can get ; and just as the first disciples must have been sure that He was with them in that upper room, so He wants us to be sure that He is with us in a special way when we go to Holy Communion.

Let us return to the Upper Room. There we find our Lord doing certain symbolic actions and using some wonderfully strange words. He took the ordinary staple food and drink of the country, and said, after breaking the bread : "This is My Body which is broken for you," and "This is My Blood which was shed for you." He told them to eat and drink this in remembrance of what He had done for them—His Body broken and His Blood outpoured for the world.

Now, what would such words mean to His disciples when they repeated them again as He had told them after His ascension ? The symbolic words were, of course, plain to them because they were accustomed to the whole idea of animal sacrifices. Did it not mean that through eating and drinking they knew they would receive Christ's life-giving nature into their hearts and be made at one with Him ?

To our Western minds the whole idea of animal sacrifice and the shedding of blood in religious matters is somewhat horrible, to say the least of it ; but of course the blood of the animal was the symbol of the life, and it seems to me easier to explain the symbolism of the expression if we say that we receive the life-giving nature

of Christ into our hearts. He comes to dwell in our hearts, and to fill us with His life-giving nature ; and so, when I am asked why I go to Holy Communion, I say also, " I go to receive the life-giving nature of Christ into my heart with His disciples." For does not His teaching lead up to this ? " Abide in Me and I in you." " I will come into him and sup with him." It is the surety of His Presence ; He knew what was in man ; He knew how weak our faith is at times ; He realised that we needed some outward and visible sign, and so He took the bread and the wine, things which we can see and handle, things His disciples knew well enough, things which are the means of sustenance of the body, and He used them to enable our weak faith to be strong, to make us sure that in " doing this " in remembrance of Him we were receiving His Divine Nature into our hearts, and could be quite sure that He was dwelling in us.

If anyone asks again : Do you limit this feeding on Him, this reception of His life-giving nature, to this service ? I would answer again : Certainly not. He gives us His life-giving nature in other ways too ; but here is a special way which He taught His disciples to use, and we gratefully accept His method, and are sure through it that He does dwell in us and we in Him, unworthy though we know ourselves to be. We have opened the door of our hearts for a special occasion and He has come in and filled us with His presence.

And there is a third aspect which is certainly as important as the other two. Both of them are benefits which God bestows upon us, but religion is not confined to getting. It is based on love, and therefore there must be in this service, as in all service, that which we give or offer ; it is included under the word worship, for there

can be no real worship without offering. Try to imagine the position of the disciples at those first communion services. Must they not have felt that the knowledge of that wonderful Presence was given to them not for selfish ends, not merely to satisfy their own longings, but to help them renew their pledge to service? The very word "sacrament" has something in it of an oath; and these men combined at this service to renew the oath of service in the cause of Christ. This fellowship of men and women, which was called the Church, offered itself and its powers corporately and individually to God. They were encouraged to do so by the words of our Lord that in forgetting self they would find life. So there is a third answer to the question why do I go to Holy Communion? "I go to offer myself, dedicate myself once more to God's service."

Isn't this side of the service too often, I will not say omitted, but at best insufficiently emphasised—this necessity to offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, as the collect immediately after receiving Holy Communion says, to our Father? And the lack of this emphasis has led people to suppose that Christianity is largely a matter deserving of the old taunt, which used to be levelled at churchgoers by non-churchgoers in poor districts where I was a curate: "They go there for what they can get." While this jibe is to a large extent untrue of material benefits, it is probably true, in a measure, of the religion of many people. The Church, for them, is a place to go for consolation and comfort, to receive Holy Baptism or Holy Communion, or God's blessing at marriage or death; but how seldom in their minds is it the place where they must offer themselves to God! The place where together we pledge ourselves to go out and serve Christ in the world, both by trying to be like Him, and

by showing something of His love in all our dealings with others? The Church will never recapture its power to change the face of the world, and win the victory of Love, until it has relighted in its members this burning desire to offer itself for the good of the world. Our primary duty is to give—which is only another term for love—rather than to receive. We have become obsessed with our privileges. God knows they are many and glorious, and we feel we must hold them at all costs—stick up for our rights; we fear to adventure these things in God's service and the service of mankind, and thus, in seeking to save our life and rights, we are really in danger of losing our soul.

I cannot leave the subject of the joy of communion without referring to the joy which comes from fellowship with others in doing Christ's work—which includes those who have passed to the fuller life. Fellowship was one of the few good things which came out of the war; men—yes, and women—realised it there as never before, its value and its attraction. Those of us who experienced it will never forget it, and because we know its power we know it ought to be a real part of our religion, and have sought to find it there. But fellowship is an elusive quality; it cannot be had for the asking; it escapes you if you try to seek it as something to be aimed at, and an artificial attempt to create it because we know we ought to have it in religion is doomed to failure. Yet here is something which ought to bring us one of our greatest joys, and power too. Toc H, I think, has found the secret not by aiming at it, but by serving together with a common aim. Once you can get people to have a common aim, determined to sink their differences, and laugh at the things which divide them—and sometimes at themselves—together with a robust common sense and an apprecia-

tion of their own limitations, you will get fellowship, and the joy which comes from it. I think that I may here use St. Martin's as an illustration, as it has nothing whatever to do with me. Why is it that men and women coming to the Church found a fellowship which surprised them, and were astonished by the atmosphere which prevailed? The answer is quite easy. It was because the people there had been taught to pledge themselves to what was called the St. Martin's spirit. You may hear it spoken of up and down the length of the land, yes, and far beyond too; it is elusive and difficult to define, but it certainly comes through the attempt to imitate the example of the Patron saint. St. Martin gave his cloak, or half of it—the story is not quite clear about that—to the man who was ill clad; he was ready to share what he had with others. This spirit of sharing has been behind the teaching and the practice of those who have made St. Martin's what it is; and whenever it has been truly followed they have found a fellowship which they did not seek. Men and women of all classes and opinions and natures knew that to think of themselves first was to be treacherous to the St. Martin's spirit; they could not face the shame of letting down their Church. Many were the sound ratings they got, I believe, if they showed any sign of the right spirit failing in them. And behind it all was the knowledge that it was God's will, that we are Christians whenever we show willingness to share.

> All who joy would win
> Must share it; Happiness was born a twin.

How can people have the joy of fellowship when even their religious life is centred in themselves, when they desire the chief seats in the church, or grumble when

they can't get what they want? How can we have fellowship if there is no desire to share with others, but only a desire to grasp all we can get? It is manifestly absurd, and until we have a common aim to share we shall never have the joy of communion. We have seen that the lack of emphasis on the reality of giving, as one of the best of reasons for coming to Holy Communion, has caused people to leave it out as the outstanding principle in the life of a Christian, and yet the very symbolism of sharing the same food and drink, the life-giving nature of God imparted to us all, irrespective of our powers, attainments or position, should be teaching us that communion with man, just as much as communion with God, can be had only by willingness to share with each other just as He is willing to share Himself with us. If we walk in the Light, the Light of Love shown forth in Christ, then we have fellowship one with another.

We have forgotten that one of the basic principles of the Holy Communion service is that it is a *Social Meal:* and in consequence we have lost the spirit of fellowship which should be ours; once the desire to share goes, all sorts of social evils are rampant, and even Christians think they have no responsibility for slums, bad housing, prostitution or preventible poverty. The Joy of Communion with God is impossible without something of the joy of communion with man.

CHAPTER VII

THINGS WHICH DESTROY JOY

IT has sometimes been said that we do not emphasise the dreadfulness of sin to-day, that we slur it over and do not talk of it as much as we should ; in fact, some correspondents complain that in broadcasting I do not keep harping upon it as I should.

I often wonder whether our theology has not got somewhat warped on this subject. Of course I know that a theology which leaves out sin is futile ; men want to know how to overcome their failings and their sins, and the glory of the good news of Jesus Christ is that it shows men how to do this in a new way, as we saw in the last chapter. But when men say we do not talk enough about sin I always want to ask whether they have tried to see what Jesus did. Was he continually inveighing against sin and denouncing those glaring sins which went on in His time as much as in ours ? Was He continually dwelling on those grosser sins which prurient people love to hear denounced from the pulpit ? I think if you will study His life and preaching you will see that it is not so. The things He chiefly denounced were just the very things which religious people don't like hearing denounced because they are the things to which they probably are most prone. The things He really did use hard words about were the sins of the religious people of His time—hardness of heart, uncharitableness, inhumanity, self-

righteousness, pride, and hypocrisy. In fact He almost seems to have slurred over the grosser sins ; He would not outwardly condemn the adulteress : though His injunction that she should "go and sin no more" is too often forgotten by those who quote this passage. He went to feed with publicans and sinners ; and He quite definitely told the religious people of the day that the harlots would go into the Kingdom of Heaven before them ; a saying not to be forgotten by us respectable religious people even to-day. No, His method, it seems to me, was to show the beauty of goodness and the marvellous love of God for men in such a manner that people would see for themselves the dreadfulness of their lives, the hopelessness of living away or apart from God. Except in the case of the Pharisees His message to the people was almost entirely positive rather than negative. He put before them good, and the joy of goodness ; He talked to them of happiness and how happiness could be obtained by positive virtues ; He showed them love and all that it means ; and those who heard with their hearts saw the pettiness and misery of their futile lives and became new people through it. And I believe this is the right and only way. It was *the* great difference between the Law and the Gospel. He did not tell them what they should *not* do, but what they must do ; He knew that motives counted more than actions, and that a dirty-minded man was as bad as one who committed adultery. I cannot conceive that He would ever have differentiated between venial and mortal sins, for He saw that hardness of heart and hypocrisy *might* be more soul-destroying even than sexual sins. Sin is a dreadful thing, for it is that by which *we* put a cloud between ourselves and God ; the light of God's love cannot get through ; and so surely the best way to get rid of that cloud is to

tell of the love that is ready to break through, rather than to harp continually on the cloud that hides it.

Let a man but turn to God and look up to see His loving face, and God will wipe the cloud off man's heart so that he can see once more.

Things, therefore, which destroy joy in our hearts are those which put this cloud between us and Him ; we no longer feel the sun's warmth and healing power and the joy goes out of life.

The root of all sin is selfishness. Selfishness is the antithesis of that self-giving which is Love. I also feel that we do not emphasise enough our Lord's teaching about the heart. "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," these are the things which defile a man ; we see a man's actions and we judge his actions, but it is that which is in his heart, i.e. his thoughts, which matters most ; if a man's heart is full of self there is no room for God, as Trench says :

> God often would enrich, but finds not where to place
> His treasure, nor in hand nor heart a vacant space.

and it is the breeding place for every kind of sin. "As a man thinketh so is he," says the writer of Proverbs, and if anyone's thoughts could be known we should know his character. Now each of us can know our own thoughts and what is more we can to a very large extent control them. It is not necessarily sin to have evil, selfish, licentious, or impure thoughts because they may come spontaneously, but it is to *dwell* on them, because we can try to think of other things. St. Paul is teaching this truth when he says : "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just,

whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." The greatest saints I know are those whose minds are filled with beautiful thoughts and especially thoughts of how they can help others, and kindly thoughts about others. One feels instinctively that God is close to them because the love in their hearts has thrown out selfishness ; in fact, they seem to have no time to think of themselves. And the things which destroy joy are just those things which make us think about ourselves. Have you ever found any real joy in the person who is self-centred or the people who are always dissecting their actions ? Can you have joy at the same time as anxiety about your soul's welfare ? The answer of Moody to the man who asked him if he were saved, " I am so busy trying to help others that I have no time to think of myself," might well be taken to heart by a great many people who worry about themselves. " Throw yourself into someone else's life who really needs your help and you will find that you forget your own worries," is surely only another way of expressing our Lord's great truth that he who loseth his life shall find it. And he who finds life finds joy.

In fact, the things which destroy joy in our lives are just the very things which we religious people have to guard against—self-righteousness, pride, hypocrisy, self-satisfaction, envy, hatred and malice ; and it is time that we Church people should realise not only how soul-destroying these things are to the spiritual life, but also how much harm they are doing to the cause of Christ and His Church. I am quite sure they are keeping many people, and especially thinking young people, from our churches. If the joy of the first Christians was one of

the chief reasons why people were attracted to Christ and joined His goodly fellowship, the Church, and the lack of it in Christians to-day is keeping people out, we have got to study the reasons why we have got away from the early Christian attitude ; and I think few will deny that the chief reason is to be found in just those things which our Lord denounced in the Pharisees—self-satisfaction, pride, pompousness, snobbery, small-mindedness, censoriousness and lack of sympathy and real love in dealing with others ; and these are unfortunately only too noticeable both in us clergy as well as the laity. I fear we think we have an inherent right to set ourselves up as judges of the conduct of others ; but did not our Lord say, "Who made Me a judge over you ?" and "Judge not, ye shall not be judged, for with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be meted to you again ?" And people are turning away from the Church just because we are so prone to judge others. That is to say, that people are being put off religion because we are not quite Christian ourselves. This is true of snobbishness too. We know well enough that snobbery is to be found in every class of society to-day. But the one place where it should not be found is in the Church and among Christian people, for the man who is a snob loses all sense of that joy which is able to abound and be abased as well. A certain padre in the war, a very able man, went to the officer commanding his unit one day and asked him why it was he did not seem to be getting on with the men in that unit, to which the officer replied : "You have asked me a plain question and I will give you a plain answer. It is because you are such a snob." All the padre could answer was, "I believe I am."

Closely allied to snobbishness is our attitude as Chris-

tians to that much abused term "a gentleman," a fine old English word which one would imagine must have our Lord for its prototype, a gentle-man, the word gentle being used in the sense with which our Lord used the much misunderstood word translated "meek." In fact, there can be no better definition of the word gentleman than a man like Jesus Christ, for there was nothing in His character of weakness or sentimentality, but there was everything of strength and courage and courteousness in His dealings with others. Whatever the word has come to mean to-day it would be good for us to go back to this definition; and on this showing there are many "gentlemen" to be found in every class of society; we talk of "a nature's gentleman" and people are surprised to find so many in other classes of society than their own; and these are rightly judged so, not because they happen to use, or fail to use, the mode of dress conventional with a certain section of society, but because while tending not to outrage conventions, they are strong and courageous and courteous in their dealings with others and especially with women as our Lord was. Unfortunately the term has come to be used of and applied to one section of society, so that the accident of birth is the only passport into this category; and in consequence men and women ape this section in dress and speech. It has come to matter a great deal more whether a man does not wear brown boots with a tail coat than whether he is courteous and kindly to others, and especially those dependent on him. One of the most potent criteria of a gentleman is his attitude towards his servants and employees, and similarly on his attitude to his "boss"; which does not mean either spoiling them and being sentimental, or kow-towing and being servile; but it does mean looking on them as human

beings and trying to do to them as you would like them to do to you, if you were in their place. The unchristian —which means the ungentlemanly—behaviour of people in all grades of society, is responsible more than anything else for our social troubles ; and the bad example has too often been set by those who would most like to be known by the term "gentleman." Sometimes I know full well it is mere thoughtlessness, but this is really no excuse since, if we really defined the word gentleman as one who is like Jesus Christ, we should be even more solicitous as regards our behaviour to those dependent on us than we should be to those of our own station in life. Through our ungentlemanliness we lose a great deal of the joy of life, the joy of seeing others happy and contented, and the joy of knowing that we are playing the game by them even if they do not respond.

It is time that some of us who profess and call ourselves Christians did some healthy changing of our minds about some of these things. To be quite candid, we have allowed ourselves to adopt the standard of the world, or the society, in which we live, and have got away from Christ's standard ; and we too often deceive ourselves with specious arguments, in excuse, which an ordinary person can see are futile. The old story, for instance, of the man who asked the servant of a clergyman offered preferment in the Church what he was going to do, and got the reply that he was in the study praying for guidance, but the missus was upstairs packing the boxes, may be a libel on two good people, but the fact remains that pride of place, and seeking the best positions in the synagogue, are almost as common to-day in clergy and laity as they were in our Lord's time ; and we think nothing of it. There is no Christian joy in the heart of the man who is always worrying about whether he has

got the position he deserves, or thinking of his rights. Our Lord's saying, "It shall not be so with you," needs emphasis to-day. It frightens me when I read of societies being formed to secure the rights of the clergy, or to hear that young men won't become parsons because of insecurity of tenure or the encroachment of the laity on their rights; it all sounds so sub-Christian.

Again, are we altogether right in our ideas about the magnification of the office of a clergyman? The ordinary Church layman wants his vicar to be a "big" man in town or village, to take a certain place in its society, and to remember the dignity of his office. Oh, yes, above all he must be dignified, which generally means that he must be just a little remote; and one sees men (largely, I think, because they know people expect this) gradually losing just that human touch and approachableness, just that spontaneous naturalness which has been their charm, and becoming afraid of giving away themselves or their position. There is a standard type to which we must conform, and once we conform to type we lose our naturalness, and with it the joy of being ourselves. We think of the office and not the work, and aim at a false dignity. In the eyes of the Pharisees Christ did undignified things; they looked upon Him as "not quite a gentleman" because He mixed with publicans and sinners; but, in fact, He didn't mind being considered unconventional so long as He could help others, and let them see that He was approachable, a man friendly to all sorts and conditions of people. If our office, or our sense of dignity or even respectability, keeps us from being approachable and human, or makes people think of us as being something removed from ordinary human beings, we need to change our minds, and to get back to being literally the servants of men as our Lord was.

And this is by no means only the clergy's fault, for it is true of the mind of certain types of laymen and women ; " my people love to have it so." A clergyman's influence depends upon himself, his own character, his likeness to Christ ; he will be respected for this and this alone. If he takes up the attitude that he must be respected for the office he holds, because he is a priest in the Church of Christ, he is taking up a false position ; he is, in common parlance, " giving himself airs," and his influence dwindles in the eyes of ordinary people. We have a tremendously responsible and honourable position as priests and ambassadors for God, but the position will not help us to be of use to God and to do His work unless we hold it as servants of Christ and of our fellow-men, as ministers and instruments for God to use. He can use our personality, our humanity, because we have placed ourselves in His hands. Once we " put on side," or fail to be human, however exalted our office may be, we lose our influence for good, because nothing could be more unlike Christ than that ; the spontaneous joy of being led by the spirit of Christ has gone. If we parsons don't count in the minds of ordinary men, it is not because our office is despised ; it is because too many of us present to the world a wrong view of that office. If we suffer—as well we may in an age of perpetual criticism of the Church, its ministers, and all its doings—from an " inferiority complex," the average man is not going to help us to sublimate it. He is not enough interested in the Church or its officials to make the attempt ; and we shall be taken at our own low valuation. If, on the other hand, we stand on the dignity of our office, without giving evidence of the beauty of character with which the faithful fulfilment of that office should have endowed us, we need to take to heart the warning given by John

the Baptist to the Pharisees, that God could make children of Abraham out of the pebbles of the Jordan bed.

To be Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields is an extraordinary responsibility and a privilege, but if it leads me to suppose that I am not as other men, then any possibility of my being of influence would disappear. The first qualification for position in the Church of God is willingness humbly to serve one's fellow-men, because by doing so one is serving God, and doing what Christ did. Pride of place simply devastates the spiritual life, whether in clergy or laity, and it certainly destroys all real joy. What joy is there in that horrible attitude of doubt in which we wonder whether we are receiving the respect due to our position? One then is no longer a minister, a servant of men, but a parasite.

CHAPTER VIII

ANOTHER DESTROYER—DULLNESS

ON the last Sunday before these holidays—holidays in which I am trying to finish this book—I happened to preach a sermon on the sin of dullness. My children, aged seven to fifteen, who had just returned from school, happened to like that sermon. Children instinctively would know that dullness is wrong—that it is going contrary to life. They thought I had better write a chapter on such a grievous sin for this book, which keeps me from playing games with them at times. I bow to their importunity, with a rather dreadful surmise that perhaps they want me to preach at myself. I hope not, but I know dullness is a danger of middle age to be guarded against; it is not merely a complaint of the lively young against us.

I think the reason for that sermon was the pastoral letter to the Church of England written last summer by our two Archbishops, in which these words occur: "Must it not be confessed that in many of our congregations there is a dullness of spirit, a languor of worship, a reluctance to make fresh adventures for the cause of God's Kingdom at home and over-seas, strangely out of accord with the splendour of the Faith which they profess?" And it goes on: "If by thus learning what the Faith really is . . . would there not come to them new joy and zeal and power, the garment of praise for

the spirit of heaviness?" After reading those words I feel there is some justification for the general aim of this book. I hope so, certainly.

The question of the dullness of services is an exceedingly important one—for one remembers that our aim is to put joy into the forefront of the lives of Christians—because if we get together a crowd of really joyous Christians, they certainly will not submit to dullness either in their worship or in their preachers. There will be an upheaval somewhere. The deadening weight of routine from which joy is absent is not confined to the country; it is just as bad in some town churches, yet here I do want to say a word for the country parson, who has borne the burden and heat of the day, and has often a wearisome, hard time. No one except those who have done it knows what it means to preach Sunday after Sunday, morning and evening, to the same congregation, without getting stale. The task really is most exacting, and something must be done to relieve the country parson. If the Archbishop's call to renewal does nothing more than give a helping hand to him, if it relieves his loneliness and sense of isolation, and gives him a fresh vision and inspiration for his work, it will have done something which will enormously strengthen the Church. It will be some reward for the work the country parson has done, sometimes with very little encouragement.

But in speaking of the sin of dullness I think of it less in connection with services than with the lack-lustre of so many ordinary Christians, both clerical and lay. You would hardly think they ever communicated with God and the abundant source of changing life. Why is it we are such a dull lot on the whole? Is it because virtue has become synonymous with respectability? Is it because Christianity is being merely respectable and

conventional? If so, there can be no doubt that something is wrong with our Christianity. We are afraid to let ourselves go—or, shall I say, are afraid to be ourselves? We are too timid to give ourselves away in the cause of love, as Christ did; we would never dare to mix with sinners, in the way He did. No one would ever accuse our Lord of being dull. What a companion! What a joy to meet! He must have been alive with surprises for those about Him. He never cared a jot what people thought or said of Him. His seeing eye discerned the hidden best through the worst of men, and He would take any risk to evoke that best. Yes, I think much of our dullness comes of having lost faith in men, and perhaps faith in ourselves; we are dull because we are without hope. Wasn't it just because our Lord always believed in His disciples and hoped the best of them, even when they failed Him, that all of them, except Judas, won through in the end? Isn't it true all the world over that the only way to win men is to believe in them to the uttermost? It is certainly true of ourselves that we are at our best when men believe in us, and at our worst when they see only what holes they can pick in us. Tell a man often enough that he is a miserable sinner and he will come to believe you, and be one; tell the same man that you believe in him and that he has good points which are worth developing, and there is every chance that he will become a better man than he is. We are doing God's work when we do that, for we are working as God works. For that was Christ's way, except perhaps with the religious people of His time; but they were well nigh beyond help, as they were convinced they were all right and could not be better. Even our Lord Himself could not help them, any more than God can help those who are like them to-day, unless

something brings them to be again as little children. And to become dull in our relationship with others means that we are failing to see new beauties in people and in life ; we are settling down to a humdrum existence —and that is only bare existence and not life at all— and in consequence we fail to commend our religion to others. Naturally the last thing sensible people want is merely to exist—they want to live for something— so they are only too likely to judge Christianity by our dullness. And dullness thereby becomes a sin. We must get rid of it, we must keep fighting against it, lest perchance we become a stumbling block to any of God's children. Surely here is one more reason for us to get back to Christ, to learn from Him something of that *joie de vivre* which was so potent in Him ; the joy which no man can take from us because it comes from living the buoyant life of love, and the giving of ourselves with Him as our Companion.

Had we lived with Christ we should never have known what was going to happen next. He was at the source of life. He was not afraid. He was full of surprises. You might find Him anywhere and talking to anyone, and bringing out in most of them the good of life which had never come to flower. Don't you often wish that the very proper people you meet would sometimes get off their chairs ? There is nothing spontaneous about our actions ; we do what is expected of us, and are so self-conscious that we daren't really be ourselves. The consequence is that our good points, the things which really are our make-up, are repressed, and we don't use them to the glory of God, don't offer them to Him because we are afraid of being thought "peculiar." And so we settle into a mould ; we are dull ; we are no longer ourselves. Some of you probably feel this about

us parsons ; but what about yourselves ? What about the men and women who have a rooted objection to any signs of enthusiasm or unconventionality ? Do you ever want to shout for joy ? If not, you are out of the stream of life. It would do you good, I am sure, though the shout were nothing but the joyous discovery of the reason for your dullness.

Of course another reason for our dullness is the lack of a fund of humour. I am sure there was much of it in our Lord's life, but His reporters either didn't notice it much, or else were afraid to bring it out in His life. In fact, I doubt that the Jews as a whole had much sense of humour. But nobody with a sense of humour can read some of our Lord's words without seeing that He must have smiled as He uttered them—the beam in a man's eye ! Holding out the other cheek for a man to hit ! Humour oils the wheels of life and certainly keeps us from being dull. But the best thing of all is to have that sense of humour which enables us to laugh at ourselves, to see how ridiculous we are sometimes ; especially when we are solemnly pompous, or substitute assertion for reasoning, when we try to make people believe we cannot be wrong. Of course no one believes it, except some of those foolish worshippers who are so bad for us clergy and no doubt for others too. If we could only laugh at ourselves it would keep us from dullness and save us from solemn silliness. What a godsend it is when we have a real friend who will help us to see ourselves as others (not our admirers) see us ; and happy the man who can see that such a friend's voice is the voice of God !

CHAPTER IX

THE JOY OF DISCIPLINE

THAT phrase sounds a bit absurd, doesn't it? It sounds rather like talking of the joy of toothache! But even toothache has its uses; it at least shows us it is time for us to go to the dentist. Anyway, discipline is a very real side of life, and an undisciplined life is unthinkable for anyone who takes life seriously. As a matter of fact practically everyone does discipline himself to some extent; the man who wishes to excel at anything certainly has to do so, whether it is in learning, commerce, or games; in social life or in the home; and in the attainment of such success as they have they do not, on the whole, look on such discipline as drudgery. Through attainment they find freedom and, in that freedom, joy. When we turn to religion, which we are assured is to bring us new and fuller life and real freedom, we should expect to find discipline an essential part of religion; and that it certainly is. We are to go back to Christ; one of the outstanding features of His life was its discipline. As He lived, so He taught; so really was He one in His life and words that it is unnecessary to suggest instances; there are so many, both in the teaching and the parables. It is necessary to emphasise this in a book of this kind, because some people have such weird ideas about love. They think it means an easy-going sort of thing, a sloppy and casual guide in life, not

hard to follow. Critics quite definitely accuse us, who preach the Gospel of Love, of being prophets who preach smooth things. Only the other day I had a letter which finished this type of accusation by saying : " The Cross is a stumbling-block—who would ever stumble at the preaching of love ? " You see, love in this person's mind is an easygoing, anæmic, sentimental quality. But as we have seen, there is no love without the Cross in it ; that which is continually giving itself, and refuses to use any weapon but love, is up against it all the time in a world which is full of self-seeking people whose chief weapon is force. Which is the easiest thing to do ? To hit a man back who hits you in the face, or, for the cause which you believe to be right, to turn the other cheek—even at the risk of being called a coward ? And yet the thing is done for Christ's sake ; and let us always remember that there is wisdom behind it, because it is the way to win friendship, to *win* men. The instinctive impulse is to use force ; but it is the surest and lasting wisdom to use love. And to what pitch of discipline must a man have attained, who, with a fiery temper himself (and perhaps a knowledge of how to use his hands), fearless and prompt, yet retaliates only with love and not force. In Temple Gairdner's life we read he actually did this in a room full of Moslem students who had just broken up his furniture. He said to the ring-leader : " Come on, friend, strike as much as you like." The man was dumbfounded, and when they had been silent for a few minutes Gairdner laughed and said : " Now let's drink coffee together " ; and they did. That ringleader became a Christian ; won by love ; and if anyone knew what discipline meant it must have been Temple Gairdner. In fact, this chapter on the joy of discipline could hardly be better illustrated than from

the life of that great man, and everyone who wishes to know what it can mean to the life of a Christian should beg, borrow, or buy *Temple Gairdner of Cairo*, by C. E. Padwick, and see what joy it brought to him. For joy was the keynote of his life, the joy with Christ, and God alone knows what part discipline played in *his* life, a life of real love continually giving of himself, offering himself to God for the sake of the Kingdom.

To think, then, that the life of love is easygoing in any shape or form is one of the most stupid thoughts imaginable ; and to live that life—even to begin to live it—we must be prepared from the first to discipline ourselves, to get freedom to express our real self, our divine self, by learning to control the lower self. I wonder whether some of our educationalists do not need to take this to heart when they are preaching self-expression ? What sort of self do they mean ? What sort of a world should we live in if we threw control of our selfish and unsocial instincts to the winds ? I am sure we should never know what Divine Love means.

This is especially true of making appointments with God, of which we have already thought. While every sort of prayer in its largest sense is the opening of the heart to God, most of us need quite definite and special times—or appointments—with Him ; in the rush of our present life, rush in work and pleasure, we find we simply must make time to get alone with God, and not only talk to Him but to let Him talk to us, and this requires very real discipline. We have to be very firm with ourselves, and sometimes with other people too, so that this time is not broken into. When people talk of prayer as a waste of time, or as being weak and unmanly, they are, of course, talking nonsense ; but they do so

because they think of prayer, or the saying of prayers, merely as formal requests that God should do things for us. When they see that prayer is the means by which they can learn God's will and His purpose for the world, and that it will help them to get at one with reality, and that it requires the same kind of hard thinking which a scientist must give to the problems he is trying to solve, then they will realise that prayer is as essential to the religious life as thought is to work ; and all this means real hard discipline ; we simply get nowhere without it ; without it we find religion a useless and insipid thing. Religion without the communion with God cannot be alive ; it is nothing but husk.

Now, as with prayer, so discipline is necessary in the sphere of morals. Our animal nature is strong within us, and rightly so too, and strong passions very often show the strong man ; they are not wrong in themselves, but only when we abuse them or let them get control, so that we can't say No. Anger is an excellent illustration. What a splendid thing it will be when anger is directed only against the evils which still warp life, and the wrongs done to our fellows ! Surely love can be and should be very angry when it sees its children condemned to a barren and tortured existence, sold as slaves to the lusts of men, or regarded as soulless tools or hands and not as human beings. It is good to be angry at such things ; and it would be well if more of that sense of outrage when the temple of life is defiled were shown by more of us. Yet what a futile thing anger is when it is misdirected, when we have not got it under control, and we let ourselves go merely because of an affront to our own pride ! The undisciplined temper in personal affairs can do and often does untold harm which we may always regret. Anger is wasted

when evoked merely by a sense of personal injury. (Isn't one of the best means of escape a sense of humour? What a fool a man makes of himself when he is really angry! If we could only picture ourselves then, we should laugh and all would be well.)

Now what is true of anger is true of all our instincts and their emotions; controlled and used in their right place they are God-given qualities, and we are unnatural if we despise them; but they need controlling, and it is only when we have learned to control them that we are really free. They become qualities we can use to the glory of God when we bring them into play at the right time and in the right place; we are free then to do so; but if they have control of us they take command at the wrong time and the wrong place, and then we are not free but slaves. And we believe, and have proved it to be true, that if we do practise this self-discipline and try to live in continual union with God we do get this essential power. We cry sometimes like St. Paul (when the fight is fierce): "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." At-one-ness with Him and seeking to do His will enables us to win freedom. When we fail it is because we have, for the time being, given up trying to please Him; our discipline to submit everything to His control is relaxed.

So our chief discipline is to make ourselves God-controlled, to let His Spirit enter us, so that we can be free; and the nearer we get to this freedom the more joy we know. Then discipline becomes, not a drudgery, not something to be taken on as a duty with which to be bored, but a means to enjoying life. The truth shall make us free to consecrate all our gifts to Him. Through it He has literally given us life, more abundant life,

because we are released from the chance waste of the rule of our passions.

I think a word of warning should be given, however, lest we think of discipline as a means of acquiring merit. I am not thinking of merit. We know that obnoxious person who thinks people should applaud him because he gets up early in the morning and they don't. Early to bed and early to rise ; that sort of thing ; health, wealth and wisdom. The end of discipline is to enable us to get nearer to God, so that our energies may do something to fulfil His purpose for the world ; that is, as sons of God, to bring His Kingdom and build His City. Once we begin to get pleased with ourselves because we practise a little discipline, say in Lent, or think we ought to be rewarded for it, like that horrible little prig, Jack Horner, we are spoiling all the use of discipline. The right type of discipline, like virtue, is its own reward ; it brings us nearer to God and to the fulfilment of the Divine Life that is in us ; it makes us more free and brings us the joy of freedom.

CHAPTER X

JOY IN THE CHURCH

I HAVE already said a good deal about Fellowship in the chapter on the Joy of Communion, as I wish to associate it with the Holy Communion Service, its rightful place. But there is still more to be said about it, for Christianity without Fellowship is an impossibility. The Fellowship is the Church, and the joy which comes from Fellowship should be one of the Church's most powerful appeals. That it is not so is due to many causes; no doubt it was easy in the early days of the Church, when it was a comparatively small community, drawn together not only by Communion with our Lord, but by prosecution of a common purpose to spread the good news throughout the world. To-day our "unhappy divisions" have entirely upset this fellowship, and sections fight with other sections, not so much on the fundamentals of the Faith (for most of us can agree on the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds) but on matters of Church order, discipline, and the explanation of the Sacraments.

One would think that these things were hardly matters to keep us permanently apart, yet they do it, and not only are we ready to fight each other, but also, which is worse, to take up a superior attitude and to say we are better than others. Now it seems to me that this sense of superiority is essentially unchristian. Is it necessary for me to think that because I believe in the section of the

Church to which I belong and think it is right, other sections are wrong? If I feel that I am right, must they who do not agree with me be wrong; am I wrong to say there is no such antithesis? I love my Church, and believe in it, whatever mistakes it has made, and hold that it is nearest to the mind of Christ—if I didn't I wouldn't stay in it—but am I therefore to think that the Roman Catholics, and the Orthodox Church of the East, and the Presbyterians, Wesleyans, etc., are all wrong? I don't think so, unless they are acting contrary to the truth and charity of Christ. That is the test. And the tragedy in our divisions is that the most important point is simply lost. Our disunion does not depend upon whether I am ready to serve Christ and stake my all on the God Whom He came to reveal, but on whether I believe in a special form of Church order or government, or in certain ideas about things which have been developed out of His teaching. I am not trying to show that our differences are small, but simply that they should not count as much as they do, when compared with our love for and desire to serve the God and Father of Jesus Christ. When you get people to join together on this basis, on this basis alone, it is surprising to find how near we are to each other; the things which divide do seem small, and there is a real unity through the Spirit, and a joy in Fellowship which surely is according to the mind of Christ and through Him.

It seems to me it is therefore an absolute duty for all of us, to whatever section of the Church we belong, to demand of our leaders that they seek every avenue by which reunion may be brought nearer, and to back them in every way that we can. The subject is one which is more pressing to-day than ever because of what is going on in South India, and in a lesser degree in Persia and

China. Is the Church going to be a Fellowship where people can feel they are one because they have to serve the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is it to be that, a federation of different sections, keeping, it may be, largely to their own form of government, although eventually with all ministers episcopally ordained for the sake of historic continuity and convenience of administration? Or are we going on as we are, with the appalling waste of men and means and the consequent waste of energy, in attempting Christ's work, yet showing the world a spectacle of dissension which at times amounts to positive hatred? What answer must a Christian make?

The difficulties are great; no one can be blind to them; but many of the leaders of our Churches know the need, and anxiously desire a solution; yet how often do they come up against a wall of bigotry in the attitude of ordinary Church worshippers of every section? These people take up the attitude, "We are all right as we are; we don't want reunion, and don't see why you should be worrying about it." This, I must say, is an insensate attitude; it takes no account of what the world is needing and seeking from the Church to-day, and makes one wonder whether churchgoers do not really care more for their comfort, their likes and dislikes, than for God's Will; even though they pray daily that God's Will may be done here on earth as it is in Heaven. May God indeed deny peace to His Church till she wakes up and tries to settle this vital issue according to His Will. Without doubt risks will have to be taken; but is the Church never going to realise that the taking of risks is an essential part of Christianity? A good many risks will have to be taken before the coming of His Kingdom, or it will never come. It is often because we refuse to take risks that the joy goes out of our religion,

and not only so, but we "miss the 'bus," as the saying is. That which is called "The Failure of the Church" in men's eyes is not in its devotional side, nor its inspiration to make men serve their generation ; it is in its public policy on great international and social questions. Temple Gairdner said before the war that the thought movement of which Nietzsche was the apostle was strengthened by the "dull anæmic lives, whether of individuals or Christian communities, by the want of interests and *joie de vivre :* the arbitrary curtailments and the simple ignorance of whole sections of human interests and experience."

The great upheaval of 1914 was forced upon us before the Christian Churches had realised what was happening ; they lacked vision, and they could not co-operate to think out things together. The Failure of the Church is the failure to bring men together who are acknowledged servants of Jesus Christ, so that they may work out His principles on the great international, social and industrial problems of the day. The problem of war in the light of Christ's principles is admittedly one of the most difficult problems for the Church to face ; but it will have to face it, or perish. There can be no doubt about what war is in the light of Christ's principles. I suppose we all look forward to the day when war is definitely made impossible, and we ought to work for it for the sake of generations yet to come (though I cannot see how the world can do without some sort of International Police Force, for the policeman is still necessary in every Christian country to-day). But the Church which stands for the principles of Christ must not falter in tackling this problem of war. We were unprepared as a Church—a fellowship of Christian people throughout the world—in 1914 ; are we going to be unprepared again ? Many thoughtful persons believe that the Church as followers

of Jesus Christ failed in 1914. They don't see many signs that it would not do so again, and are looking for fruits meet for repentance ; they realise that in modern war evil is almost bound to become good and good evil ; they are taught to hate their enemies when Christ teaches us to love them ; truth has to be suppressed so that the nation's *morale* may not suffer ; deliberate lies are concocted about the enemy's doings, and it is treasonable sometimes to tell the truth. We must be ready not only to confess our failure, but to reaffirm our faith that the Way of Life is the way of Fellowship, not only with God but with each other, and to affirm that war is one of the greatest destroyers of Fellowship. If we walk in the light, as Christ did, we have fellowship one with another. It seems to me a waste of time to consider *as individuals* whether we were wrong in what we did in 1914 ; given the same conditions, the amount of light we had then, I think most of us would do the same again ; but we have learned a great deal since then, not only about war, but about the mind of Christ, and one of the chief things the Church must tackle is the whole question of war, and tackle it soon. We want to rejoice in our Church ; to be happy in the certainty that it is following the mind of Christ ; if it calls us to sacrifice or to obloquy in these things I believe we should be glad to follow, however hard it might be ; anyway, I am sure that the Church as well as individuals has got to get back to the God of Jesus Christ and know His Will, and that in this alone is to be found permanent joy. The Lambeth Conference meets this year ; many of us hope for great things from its pronouncements ; we should be failing in our loyalty to our Church unless we pray, and pray earnestly, that our Bishops may lead our branch of the Catholic Church in a new decade back to the God of

Jesus Christ, so that we can take a new joy in her and her fellowship. I have taken war merely as an illustration, but, of course, there are many other subjects crying out for definite and courageous leadership, on which the younger generation especially wants to know the mind of the Church ; there are industrial and social relationships ; marriage in the light of modern conditions and, not least, a rational attitude on the question of Sunday Observance. Of course, I know that former Lambeth conferences have made exceedingly valuable pronouncements on these subjects, of which many people know little, but though these have been given, it seems to me very little has been done, and it is actions for which people are asking to-day. Is the Church going to take her right place, and lead the world in international, social and industrial righteousness ? We look to her to do so, because we love her and believe in her message as the true word which will light the world away from the road which leads down to chaos. We want the joy of knowing that she is, in this, at one with her Lord. And the personal question in all this for each one of us is : Are we trying to help our leaders ? That is of supreme moment. Are we ourselves keen on international social and industrial righteousness ? Leaders are helpless without a body of opinion behind them. If we are not, it seems to me we are not acting in accordance with the mind of Jesus Christ ; and our own personal righteousness, however great, is not being placed on the Altar for the God of Love to use so that His Will may be done, His Kingdom come in the world to-day as it is in Heaven. And, quite candidly, I tell you there is a shorter way of describing such an attitude ; we are betraying our Lord, for we are making frustrate His sacrifice, which He offered for the world's Redemption.

CHAPTER XI

THE JOY OF SUNDAY

WHAT a wonderful day it ought to be, oughtn't it? Full of Hosannas and Hallelujahs and Songs of Praise, for it is the Resurrection Day, no other; the first day of the week, the day which brought such joy to the Fellowship of the disciples that they became new men, and never lost that sense of joy, but showed it to be God's great gift to the world. Just as Christ brought new life, new hope to the world by the Resurrection, so Sunday, the first day of the week (which had never been recognised as anything special before) was to be the day of joyful worship to make a good start to each week; a day to remind the Church, the Fellowship, of the new life in Christ which was ours, a life of joy because He, by His perfect life of love even to the most cruel death, had won the Victory of Love and had shown men that Love was the one principle which ruled the world, God's very nature; and that the Church was to be at one with God by living and proclaiming that Love.

Hallelujah! Jesus lives! We are more than conquerors when we try to live the life of Love with Him, and we rejoice to get together on this day of joy and sing Hallelujah.

Am I right? Well, what about it? What is Sunday to you? Is it a day of real, sheer—I had almost said riotous—joy? Ought it not to be so? Yet I think you

will admit that for many it is not so and has not been so. Well, of course, it is not an easy subject to deal with. "A thorny subject, Brother, which he who tries to handle will get himself scratched." No doubt; yet we ought to think it out together plainly, and without fear of what people will say, remembering that there is a crown of thorns which is the emblem of Victory.

Shall we face the facts in our modern world as they appear to us? They are these:

1. For many, Sunday is a dismal day and has been so for years. It has been associated with nothing but restrictions, best and unwonted clothes, dismal services and large boredom. No one could call Sunday a joyous day for these.

2. For others, Sunday is a day of entire pleasure, very often without any thought of how much their pursuit of pleasure affects other people or robs them of that which they believe to be their right on Sunday. Neither can we call this joy—for pleasure is by no means always joy; a pleasure which does not take God into it and God's scheme for the world and is merely selfish, cannot have so grand a name as *joy*.

3. Others, again, find it simply a day of rest from toil, a necessary rest, too; for it is one of God's and Nature's laws that man should have one day's rest in seven; and no man can break Nature's or God's laws with impunity. It has been tried and always failed. Yet even here if God be left out, I doubt whether it is really a day of joy. Relaxation, rest, opportunities for fellowship and reunions, chances for town-dwellers to see the country; how good and necessary these are for all of us, but can our joy in these be complete without worship?

4. Others, again, make it a day of genuine worship; they try, whatever they are going to do, to put God first, to let him take His right place on His day; and though they may do things of which others would not approve, and are not always found in church at every service, they definitely try not to give unnecessary work to others, and I believe they find Christian joy.

5. Others, again, not only attend their regular services and find joy in them, but because they know how much they are needed to do God's work, to take classes and care for the children, they willingly give up their leisure, and often well-earned rest, out of love for Him; self-sacrificing souls these, to whom if real joy does not come, it cannot be the Father's fault. These have been the backbone of the Church; all honour to them; may they ever have that joy of service which no man can take from them. But we must not think it is given to everyone to do this; and many who could not do this, give just as self-sacrificing work on week days in other ways.

Now, if Christians are to make Sunday the joyful day which God means it to be, we have got to be guided by Christian principles and not by rules; the dangers of sticking to rules was sufficiently emphasised by our Lord in dealing with the Pharisees on the subject of the Sabbath, probably the best of which is found in St. Luke xiii, 10–17, as that excellent monthly pamphlet called the Bible Reading Fellowship[1] says, "(Christ) lifts the whole question of Sabbath observance out of the plane of rules and regulations to that of human need. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," and so was Sunday.

Human need. What does Humanity as God sees it, need?

Well, we need worship. We need opportunities to know the highest when we see it—or how are we to love it? We need the vision of God's love, that is of God Himself, so that seeing Him we may desire to accord with the highest, and offer ourselves to Him that He may use us to show His love in our daily lives.

For most of us, I expect, this means some sort of corporate worship; if we really want to make it a day

[1] Published by S.P.C.K. monthly, 2d.

of joy we feel we want to sing our praise with our fellows ; we want to share our joy.

All who joy would win must share it.

Let us look to it, then, that our services are not dull, that we get an opportunity of singing Hallelujah.

For many of us, as you will have seen in what I have said of the Joy of Communion, it will mean especially the Holy Communion Service, for we feel that He Who knows what is in man knows what is best for us, and how we could best be reminded of His love and God's love for all mankind. But whatever form it may take the principle remains that man needs worship, and needs to practise it quite definitely and regularly ; and what better day for most people than Sunday ? There is, however, a danger here which must be stated, and that is, that people come to look on Sunday as the only day for worship. If we make one place or one day *too* sacred, we tend to minimise the sacredness of the rest of the week, and a religion which is not an everyday and work-a-day religion is entirely hopeless. Many, too, through modern conditions, find it well-nigh impossible to worship on a Sunday ; in large towns this is often so, when the whole family is transported into the country. We therefore will do well to encourage these to see that it is just as possible to do their worship on a week-day and find their joy in doing it.

Then, too, man needs rest. We have seen that one day's rest in seven is vital to humanity, and they who can should certainly " down tools " on Sunday ; not all of us can do so ; to satisfy man's need, whether of worship or material necessity, some of us have to work, and for us it is necessary to see that we get one day in seven ; man's need, too. But the vast majority can and do take their

rest on Sunday, and must surely as Christians see that they do not rob others of their rest unnecessarily.

For rest does not necessarily mean inactivity. It can become literally a curse, for the Devil will find plenty of work for idle, aimless folk to do even on Sunday.

Rest will mean for some people an opportunity for quiet in the midst of a noisy and busy life ; opportunity for reading ; a chance to see the beauties of Nature which are closed to them in the week ; to hear good music ; to renew fellowships impossible except on that day.

Rest will mean for others recreation of one kind or another : walking, cycling, golf, tennis or other sports ; things which their bodies need, especially those who lead a sedentary life on week-days. For them, as Christians, it is their duty to keep two rules always before them :

(*a*) That they do not take from anyone unnecessarily the opportunity of worship, and of one day's rest in seven ;

(*b*) They do not become an offence to their neighbours or to worshippers by boisterousness and thoughtlessness in the things that they do.

Here are, I believe, the principles upon which as Christians we should consider our behaviour on Sundays.

They will not always be easy to work out.

Few will deny, though they do not like it, that trains, trams and buses are necessary on Sundays under our modern conditions, if only for town dwellers to get part of the day in the peace and quiet of the country.

But the principles I have indicated should be followed in regard to ordinary amusements. That is, they would allow people to play ordinary games for recreation on Sundays ; but it would be wrong to allow organised sports of any kind where a charge is made for admission .

Allow such organised sports, and at once large numbers of people must be at work, and not at recreation, and thus lose their rest for something that is unnecessary. This is the reason that I have always opposed strenuously the opening of cinemas and entertainments of that kind on Sunday, and would oppose the opening of theatres; I do not want to see people robbed of rest in order to provide entertainment for others. It seems to me that all entertainments given on Sunday evenings, according to this principle, should be given voluntarily and especially by Church people, after the method of the Sunday entertainments in the large hall in Croydon —which we opened by permission of the Borough Council. It was for the good of young people of both sexes, and it was worked by volunteers through the winter without any attempt at giving "religion." Let me say our volunteers were drawn from many different Churches, both Anglican and Free, in the town.

If only our laws could be framed more on this principle, there would be a great deal more equity than there is at present. Talkies are allowed but theatres are not; cinemas are allowed on one side of a street and not on another; concerts are allowed so long as a percentage is given to charity, and artists have to work in consequence; to say nothing of the doorkeepers, waiters, and others.

On the same principle no luncheons or drinks would be served in golf clubs and no paid caddies allowed; members would bring their own refreshments, as I believe is done on some courses in Scotland. On the other hand, portions of public parks would be allowed for friendly games of cricket or football within definite hours.

The fact is that crowds of people are being robbed now of a well-earned Sunday rest for quite unnecessary

reasons, for people could get the healthy amusement they desire at a little extra trouble to themselves, and by the exercise of a little intelligence, and still keep to the principles on which Sunday should be maintained as a joyful day of worship and rest. The Christian standpoint is to do unto others as we should like them to do to us ; if we put ourselves in the place of the other man there would be a great deal less unnecessary work given to people on a Sunday than there is to-day.

To me it does not seem a valid argument to urge that so to regularise Sunday recreation would be a hardship on a large number of citizens who are not Christians, and who therefore do not hold with Christian principles ; certainly I am sorry for them, but as to Sunday rest I believe it is an eternal principle—anyhow, it is very good for us all—and as we are still a Christian country, and Sunday is established as a day of rest by law, therefore they must conform to our laws.

May I conclude this chapter by making a suggestion to Christians who week by week go into the country on Sundays from our large towns with their family ; namely, to use some of our beautiful country churches for their Sunday worship. I believe it would make Sunday a happier day, benefit their children, and be an enormous encouragement to many an isolated and struggling Vicar and his congregation.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION—THE JOY WITH GOD

THE world we live in is a good world ; it is God's world which He created and is creating for His children ; it has got out of gear—nobody ought to be satisfied with the world as it is—because man has wandered away from God and is using God's gifts generally for his own selfish ends. That is evil, and the end of it must be evil. God, all down the ages, has been trying and still is trying to reconcile the world unto Himself. Nearly two thousand years ago Someone came and lived a Life such as God meant man to live ; He showed men what God is like, and told them that the only way of life was to follow Him, and so become at one with God ; He brought At-one-ment with God by doing completely what God wanted. He taught them to accord with the creative spirit of the world through hope, joy and love. To men who followed Him He gave power to become themselves the sons of God. He showed to men Life as God meant it to be for man, full, radiant and beautiful, and He quite clearly revealed that the more men try to live at one with God, the fuller life would become.

He offers no easy way to His children. The Way of Love is no bed of roses ; in fact, the more one thinks of it, the more one realises how strenuous are the lives of those who are really trying to live at one with God—to right wrongs, to bind up the broken-hearted, to give

liberty to those who are bound, to give self-respect to those who have lost it, to bring about peace and good-will among nations, classes, and our neighbours. When one sees their lives and the amount of time and effort they give to the cause of God and their fellow-men, one is not surprised that our Lord called it the taking up of the Cross. And how anyone can say that the way of Love is softly sentimental and that it costs nothing, or that Love is an effeminate kind of religion, simply beats my comprehension ; of course, it means that they have never tried it and don't know what they are talking about. And here is the truth : you cannot know what the way of Christ means unless you have tried to walk along it with Him. Christianity is the Way of Life. The teaching of Christ is not something to be admired, but to be lived, and we do not find the power of God until we really are trying to do His Will. We can't be religious in the Christian sense unless our religion enters into the whole of life, and we are willing to submit our lives to the doing of God's will, which means the living by the law of Love, and seeing the world and the good in it and the evil with God's eyes—the eyes of Love.

When one tries to look upon the world and the men in it with God's eyes, I think the chief thing that strikes one is God's hopefulness. Just think of the risk He took in giving man free-will, especially when one realises the way we may and do use it to defeat His purpose. And yet He is always hopeful ; even after they have killed His Son, as in the parable, there will be others who will see what love means and will take over the vineyard and work it according to God's Will. So Christ, too, with God's insight was always hopeful of man. He treated them as if they were better than they were and so brought out the best in them. He believed in His disciples, frail and stupid

as they were, and surely He was justified in His belief. With His Spirit guiding and accompanying them they changed the face of the world and brought new joy and hope and love into the societies of men. Even through the dark ages afterward, when men fell away from His purpose of Love, there were always some who kept the lamp burning and bent their lives to His Will. So, it seems to me, we may be hopeful both for the future of the world and for the future of men, too. There are always men to be found who are ready to listen to the still, small voice which speaks to their hearts rather than to the amplifier which calls aloud to their selfish instincts, and who prefer—yes, really prefer—to tend the lamp of love rather than to stand in the limelight of the world, the limelight which blinds men to what God means them to be and do.

And the reason for this hopefulness is not hard to find ; like forgiveness and Love it is redemptive ; we cannot get away from that. The man who really helps you is the man who hopes the best of you—better than you deserve—the man who is ready to forgive you, however hard that may be for him, because he knows that by forgiveness, however little you deserve it, he will not bind you by chains of his own making, but may lead you back to fellowship with him ; even though forgiveness amounts to "seventy times seven." And if God's design for the world and for men is redemptive in this way, it is surely His children's duty—nay, their pleasure —to try to see their world in His way ; when they see it in His light, then it is their destiny to submit to His Will. "Look up and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh" is not only the message of Christ to the world, but the way of Christ, and our message for each of His children. It is the way of Love, however hard

and even impracticable it may seem at times, and with it comes the joy which no man takes from us. Others may think such men are fools, and may call them visionaries, just as the Cross was and is foolishness to some; but they will have an uncanny feeling that such men have got something which they cannot find, and that, whatever it is, it brings a joy that lightens the whole of life.

At the beginning of this chapter I spoke of those who give their lives to God's purpose, and to serving their fellow-men, and what the cost of it is to them. It is, without doubt, the carrying of a cross; yet ask them if it is worth while, ask them if it is a burden, and they will smile as they tell you that they have found a joy, profound and beautiful, which the selfish life could never bring. God give us grace to see that His Kingdom may come on earth, and that by following the way to it with God as our friend, encourager, inspirer and guide—with Him we may know the joy which no man and no circumstances of life can ever take from us.

The joy with God. Yes, it is that alone, joy with Him which will bring us the joy no man can take from us. Only the other day in reviewing a book in one of the daily papers a writer said we have found Jesus, so we don't need Christianity any more. But Jesus is no good to me unless I have found the God of Jesus too. I cannot do as Jesus did or live according to His law of Love unless, as He did, I know His God is with me, His power is mine, His very Life pulsates through me. If Jesus lived in communion with and gloried in His Father—and who can read that great life and leave this out?—shall not I, beset with every tendency to selfishness and the negation of love, need such communion too? We have only "found Jesus" when we have found

His God too, and this is Christianity ; this is the way to joy, the only way, and in walking along it we find Jesus, the Power of God and the Life of God, walking by our side.

EPILOGUE

THERE you have my own simple faith as a parson whose work is in the centre of this noisy and bewildering civilisation. You must forgive the inadequacy and shortcomings of my testimony to what is, all my experience in war and peace teaches me, the veritable Word, to which the busy world must turn, or it is lost. My chief hope is that my testimony may help some of you to establish your faith, or at least that it has thrown out some lines of thought which may hold your lives firmly to the God Whom Jesus Christ came to reveal. If it has helped you in any way at all to see Him more clearly as a profoundly significant and lovable Person—*above all as a living Person*—worthy of all the love and service we can give Him, I am content. If I have offended when urging this, believe me it is because I know my own failings, and see the appalling danger of giving way to them ; the spirit of Phariseeism and all it means is always with us who profess Christianity. If I have omitted phases of Sacramental or Evangelical teaching which seem to you essential to Christian joy, believe me that also is not because I do not realise their value, but simply because I hope that, at any rate, some of my readers will be led on to seek them from others who are better qualified to expound them. My belief is that a large number of people really desire to know what some of us who bear the tremendous responsibility of broadcasting actually believe about Christianity, and

the effect it ought to have upon life in general and their lives in particular. I have written chiefly for them to supplement what one has little time for in the few minutes allotted for broadcast sermons. I hope and pray that God will use this book to His honour and glory. If it has not helped you, will you pray that someone else reading it may be led into the way of truth and the knowledge of God's love ?

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